CHAPTER First

Introduction

Social history, as understood today, encompasses the sum total of all activities of man in the society[1]. It not only deals with the political, social, cultural and religious facets of human society but also covers other shades like mentalities, attitudes and behaviour pattern of humans[2]. This view of history, besides broadening the scope of historical research has simultaneously widened the range of source material as well. The Annals school of France[3], in particular, has given a new direction to research by laying a good deal of emphasis on studying history in totality. The inter disciplinary approach to history is stressed for understanding the variegated facets of society in toto[4]. Viewed against this background, it would be useful to conduct an enquiry into the various changes that Kashmiri society witnessed during the critical periods of its history (1819-1947).

The period under reference is a period of crises in the history of Kashmir[5]. In the first place, the Sikh rule in Kashmir (1819-1846) was marked by tyranny and oppression and the regular drain of wealth led to the appalling heights of misery and poverty of the people[6]. Little doubt, that when the Dogras replaced the Sikhs in 1846, the most pressing problem that plagued the new rulers was to deal with the discontented lot or rural peasantry and urban labour. Secondly, the Sikh rule paved the way for the Dogra occupation of Kashmir in the wake of Zorawar Singh's[7] conquest of Ladakh. The problems of the people of Kashmir came into sharp focus particularly after the sale of

the valley to the Dogra Chief Gulab Singh by the British and the consequent foundation of Jammu and Kashmir State[8].

The Dogra rule in Kashmir (1846-1947) may be rightly divided into period viz, 1846-1889 and 1890 to 1947. The first phase was marked by the increased transference particularly the Punjabis' and Dogras. Consequently the Kashmir peasants lost the proprietary rights on the land and this together with grant of chaks to some influential Pandits of the city encouraged absentee land lordism. This new mechanism which apparently looked to bring big chunks of waste land under cultivation and thereby ensure enormous increase in the revenue of the State, inwardly aimed at giving boost to the class which would serve the colonial interests of the Dogra rule. This division of lands has a tremendous bearing on the social fabric of the Kashmiri society. The periodical peasant migration that followed this new agricultural device initiated by the Dogras during the period under reference led to far reaching consequences of socio-cultural and religio-economic nature in the valley[9]. It helped in developing a mode of collective mentality and a socio-religious pschye, which was distinctively unique in character and spirit. The researcher intends to identify the distinctive characteristics of Kashmiri social life particularly during the period under reference with the help of the rich treasure of oral literature – Folklore. Besides, focussing upon the peculiar social setting and the collective mentality, our attempt will be to examine the response of the folk to the formation of distinctive religious behaviour. It would be interesting to examine the different forms of Kashmiri folk-literature, as most of the genres, besides, depicting the tyranous behaviour of the official elite, throw flood of light on socio-cultural and religio-economic dimensions of Kashmiri social life.

The second part of the Dogra rule was marked by Kashmiris gradual transition from medieval to modern era. With the development in the means of communication and particularly the opening of the Jehlum Valley Road, led to far-reaching changes which had a direct influence on the socio-economic life of the people. Modern education introduced by the missionaries evoked mixed response in the valley, and under the impact of new influences, the age old social customs, rituals, superstitions and practices underwent some degree of change. The present study aims at bringing into focus the mixed response of the folk towards these changes of far-reaching social significance. Since, there was complete ban on the freedom of expression, and there was close net work of rapacious officials to monitor every activity of disgruntled Kashmiris, people recorded silently the agonies of the ages, they experienced at the hands of different exploiting agencies on the states of their chests and transmitted them directly or symbolically through various categories of rich Kashmiri folk-lore. This rich treasure of historical information has not till now been utilised fully by the historians for the reconstruction of social history of Kashmir.

One of the significant forms of Kashmiri folk songs *Lari Shah*[10], is the most important source in this regard. The other equally important genres also contain invaluable information about the yearnings, aspirations, protests, beliefs, customs, rituals and superstitions practised by the common folk. The most horrifying memories connected with the most inhuman practice of corvee[11] (Begar) are pathetically recorded in the popular literature of the period. The different *Bhanda Pethers*[12] (folk plays) are suggestive of the tyrannies of the Sikh and Dogra rulers and their administrative subordinates.

The festive and marriage songs like *Rov*[13] and *Wanvun*[14] form the running commentary of the pains and pangs of Kashmiri women, deprived of every right in the male dominating Kashmiri society in general, and during the period under reference in particular. The study regarding the position of Kashmiri women shall remain incomplete without a serious examination of Kashmiri folk-literature. The researchers who, untill very recently relied more on the established conventional sources, would not explore in toto the real agony and anguish to which the daughters of this land of Sharda were accustomed to. The innumerable social evils which inadvertantly found their way in the Kashmiri social fabric in the wake of long periodical male migration to the distant plains of Punjab could hardly find any place in our historical literature. Therefore, an attempt has been made in the present dissertation to examine analytically the information embodied in *Wanvun* and *Rov* songs of Kashmiri folk-literature for the objective understanding of the position and the status of Kashmiri women during the period under survey.

Although our primary aim is to examine Kashmiri folklore as a source for studying Kashmiri society, an attempt shall be made to study such hitherto unutilised sources in conjunction with the material used by the historians so far.

The proposed study would not treat works of folk-literature as a mere play of momentary or spontaneous expression of imagination, or isolated outbursts of excited brains but deep felt expressions rooted in the ethos of the Kashmiri society. We aim at assessing different genres of Kashmiri folk-literature such as proverbs, sayings, riddles, songs, tales, folk plays and other forms of the discipline, produced or in use, during the period of historical crises, not from a view point of literature but from a stand point of

history. We shall try to exercise utmost caution while studying variety of folk literary compositions. In this regard, an attempt shall be made to substantiate the findings gathered from different categories of folk literature by the established historical source material like official documents; archeological finds and other relevant and historically sound documents – which among other things include... creative literature; travellogues; and the texts of the Sufi Saints.

Natural calamities like floods, famines, droughts, fires and earthquakes which formed the distinctive features of Kashmir history from the remote times, occurred most frequently during the period under study. How these recurring natural calamities helped in fashioning the peculiar socio-religious behaviour of Kashmiris shall also form a subject of debate in the present work. We are fortunate enough to have a good amount of literary material available in Lari Shah (Kashmiri folk song) which provide enough information about the subject under citation. Customs, habits, rituals and traditions have rightly of been acknowledged as the repository of the social heritage of human society all over the world[15]. These socially approved exercises not only depict the psycho-social make-up of the society but these reveal the multiple religious beliefs and thought processes of the people. These uniform approved ways of collective acting also cluster the social feelings; and the obedience of customary rules, which constitute as one of the most important elementary ways in which the individual responds to the call of social life and realises his dependence upon the group[16].

The present work attempts to examine the wide range of customs, rituals and ceremonies practised by Kashmiries from a view point of social history and it has been

our endevour to review these approved collective exercises as a part of socio-religious life of Kashmiri society.

Unknowingly, the folklorists bring into focus popular religious shades, food habits, modes of dress; means of amusement and recreation; customary laws etc. and thereby depict a picture of the complexities of the socio-cultural style of the region and its people. While a good deal of research has been done with regard to the political and administrative aspects of Kashmir history, very little effort has so for been made to study the culture, complex traditions, and the social life of the common people. The researchers have altogether neglected the study of folklore as a source of information, which otherwise should have proved a useful index to the life style of the people. The folk-literature, preserved in different genres reflects the development of human mind during the different periods of historical times. Since the major source of folk-literature is human society itself[17], the elemental moorings that are at the root of human society are sought to be illustrated in a very artistic manner in different categories of folk-literature. Being recognised fully as an unornamental means of mass expression, folk-literature has now assumed the status of a primary and most reliable source of historical research and information[18]. It has been recognised beyond doubt, that this kind of popular literature is woven round the commoner's aspirations, desires and hopes, urges and fears, games and feasts, rituals and festivals, beliefs and superstitions, sorrows and joys and as such, present an unambiguous details about the different shades of the social life of any human society. Since the new concept of history extends considerable weightage for understanding the life pattern of the commoners as against the elite and the privileged (as was the subject of historical criticism in the past) and intends to study

man in the wider context of human history, as such, the importance of folk-lore as a source for studying the history of Kashmiri society can never be minimised.

Literature and History

Literature as an important discipline of art, has always been defined as an artistic representation of life. The element of art, with maximum stress on an emotional make-up of human mind, no doubt, distanced the discipline of literature from the domain of history. Untill very recently historians believed that poetry reflected life not as a documentation of facts but as a manifestation of ideas nurtured by vibrations of consciousness[19]. They therefore attached little importance to this kind of literary source. They believed that the discipline lacked the necessary attraction as it had no elite orientation which was supposed to be the pre-requisite for every historical literature. The element of imagination which is thought to be the soul of literature, was given the status of untouchable and it was thought exclusively as anti-historic, to treat imagination as a tool to understand the psycho-social pulse of an individual or a society[20]. But the attitude underwent a considerable change with the illuminating theories put forward by the pioneers of the new school of total history, who asserted that no historical fact can be understandable, unless analysed and examined from inter-disciplinary approach[21]. They believed that individual could only be meaningfully comprehended within his social context. This helped in liberating the historian from the conservative outlook which made him hesitant over the years to see its relationship with the whole spectrum of the human sciences and the domain of art as one of equals. This not only widened the range of historical evidence and the source material but it also extended the boundaries of historians focus from elite to commoners. The object of historians attention was extended to cover a whole range of phenomenon from material

structures through to the secret and unconscious. In other words, the historians thrust was shifted from the individual to the collective, from political to social history; from description to analysis; from monocausal to multidimensional explanations[22]. The approach also opened the door for all, who had previously been perceived either to be without history or were kept out of historical ambit. This new approach to history extended thereby the historians legitimate sources well beyond the conventional documents to the widest range of written and unwritten evidence.

This extension of historian's legitimate boundaries provided enough liberty to scholars to bring those otherwise, abandoned areas of study under the perview of historical review. One such marginalised areas of study till seventy was folklore. The importance of folklore as an academic discipline was abundantly recognised first by sociologists and anthropologists. In the past twenty years the trend has continued. An increasing number of social anthropologists, notably Clifford Goertz and Marshal Sahins in order to make their studies more objective and scientific gave their studies a historical dimension[23]. Of late historians have begun to realize the significance of oral literate as a primary source for reconstructing the history, most particularly the social history of the humans.

Untill the end of the nineteenth century, history as an academic discipline had not come out of the monopoly of the Rankian School of historiography, who believed it to be the exclusive concern of great political personalities and their tastes and dislikes of governance. But at the end of the nineteenth century this traditional approach of history was vehemently attacked at. One of the most vocal of the critics, Karl Lamprecht, denounced the German historical establishment as outdated. He instead,

called for a "Collective history" which emphasised for seeking concepts from wide range of disciplines. "History", lamprecht declared with characteristic boldness, "a socio-psychological science".

Viewed against this background, the folk-literature, which is considered to be the true mirror of the society, assumed much significance as a psycho-historical source. Historians explored that the true knowledge of the behavioural patterns of the humans, their collective mentality can not be obtained accurately unless traditions, legends, myths, proverbs, tales, riddles and other alike elements of folklore are studied seriously.

The concept of total history further widened the scope of historical research, as it laid stress 'to know not only the ranges and the summits but also the base of the mountains, nor merely the heights and the depths of the surface but like whole continental mass[24]. In their attempt to make the history 'wider and more human history', the advocates of the concept of 'Total history' like Turner and Robinson, Block and Febvre, did all to unchain the history from the Shakles of political domination. This new approach to history not only broadened the spectrum of historical focus, but it also helped in acknowledging the relevance and usefulness of creative and popular literature as an important tool for providing meaningful, objective and comprehensive insight into the interior depths of the human mind.

The introduction of anthropological perspective added new dimension to historical research. The fresh interest in myths and legendary tales, studies of the constructions – transient or enduring – of social mentalities for exploring historical context in literary compositions can well be obtained from the remarks of Dennis Smith, the reputed Historian and Sociologist. He remarks that:

"All things being interconnected in the intellectual movements, a re-evaluation of factors other than those which had been considered the primary determinants in a mechanistic and vision of history led to historians shifting their attention to the more intangible aspects of collective reality such as beliefs, images, processes of opinion formation, aspirations and cultural traits. This attention extended in many directions and the new perspective that were created undoubtedly comprise the most recent chapter in the evolution of historiography"[25].

The assertion, if assessed exclusively on the basis of conventional sources is little to benefit a researcher towards understanding the different processes which generally mould the social fabric of the society. The folk-literature which is the spontaneous expression of the group reactions and responses within a distinct ideological framework is sure to reveal the forces, which had a role in fabricating the socio-cultural milaux of the society.

Folk Literature as a source of History

The urgency to study folklore as a source for understanding the life and the character of Kashmiris has been felt with increasing desire, first by European missionaries. The notable among those, who did a pioneering work, include among others, J. H. Knowls, Grierson, and Stein. These scholars with missionary zeal approached professional story tellers and collected good number of Kashmiri folk-tales and proverbs[26]. These collections on the one hand facilitated the job of English administrative officials and other related categories to help in understanding the historical psyche and the character of the people, and on the other hand, it opened a new area of study for scholars to venture in. Any human activity has a social aspect. The human personality, an incredibly complicated cerebrel being, highly susceptible to impressions and ardently striving for survival and self expression, reflects in true sense the outcome of a social context; but it has been observed that in the conventional sources of history, the tacit assumptions in a given society were advertantly or

inadvertantly overlooked and thus the social context was neglected to great extent. With the focus on interdisciplinary approach, the truth of the historical situation, phenomenon or period began to be rediscovered from new relics and the traces embodied in creative and other forms of popular literature. Commenting on the relevance of oral sources G.J. Rennier remarks, "Among historical traces, along with the written traces, the oral traces, no less serve as an authentic source of history. These traces, we find inhuman society in the form of institutions, customs of the people, religious beliefs, social doctrines, ethical principles, traditions, legends and superstitions[27]. Folk literature, which forms as one of the strongest and the richest medium of collective social expression, bear the imprint of all such human activities and therefore, it could rightly claim to be treated as one of the primary and reliable historical sources.

W. L. Warner and P. S. Lunt defined society as "a group of mutually interacting individuals," Contacts between individual groups and cultural communities lead to some constant interactions, which produce change. Professor Morgen Thau observes: "The pluralism of domestic groupings and conflicts tend to impress upon the participants the relativity of their interests and loyalties and thus to instigate the clashes of different groups". The study of Kashmiri proverbs and sayings bring into focus the marked social conflicts, which had a role in fashioning the social destiny of the community. For example, Kashmiri proverbs and sayings like:

Wazli kani Tsop kadun
or Babe Bed Tam Te Khedmath Kartam
or Tsel Venyan Bronh Te Īārvenyan Peth.

(Bite an apple from the red end)
O, FAther, I wish you were too old to look after me
Take a lead when you are chasted, and if you are among the chasers, be last in the run).

These sayings not only reveal the group behavioural pattern of Kashmiri society, they at the same time depict the tension and the conflict of the collective Kashmiri mind, which could be the outcome of the variety of forces; which had coloured the inward canvas of Kashmiri social life. This philosophy of finding historical truth from literary compositions (both creative and folk) has been endorsed by Vico in his publication of **La Scienza Nuova**. According to him "Every piece of literature is basically an historical fact of "the moment, the milieu and the race"[28].

The study of folklore increase our powers of psychological insight which is considered to be pre-requisite for the investigator, who intends to unveil the different shades of collective human behaviour. Since literature portray human beings in action, it therefore, represent the truth of the moment with an artistic touch of imagination. But to have an objective understanding of the fact, the researcher needs to exercise necessary caution. "This source of evidence", according to Perkins, "needs to be tested, refined, melted down, and allayed with other forms of documentation to become historically usable"[29]. The folklore, which is now recognised as an essential element of oral history provides a kind of direct access via memory, to the essense of past experience. It equips the researcher with the tool of memory that in turn helps in producing otherwise unreachable insights into the living processes of historical memory whether individual or social. The information derived from oral sources like folklore gets more authenticity and becomes historically valid when it is validated by more respectable evidence. The sensible souls, in the field of historical scholarship, have been conscious of the relevance and the utility of folklore as a source of history. This awareness regarding the richness of the oral sources, prompted them to keep in sight, the oral literature, along with the other historical material. Even the celebrated writer of

Rajtarangni, Kalhana, has taken enough support from the popular lore current during his time. Commenting on the keen historical sense of Kalhana, Stein writes:

> *"It can not be doubted that Kalhana had taken many of the legends and anecdotes so frequent in the earlier portion of his narrative, direct from the traditional lore current in his own time and not from the early writers. This is proved in numerous cases by the clearly local character of the accounts reproduced or the manner of their relation ... they enable us often to trace the earlier forms of local traditions still extant in Kashmir, and always furnish interesting details bearing on the ancient topography or folklore of the valley"*[30].

In sharp contrast to Kalhan's historical modality, the other chroniclers who after him continued his historical work, adopted intriguing silence towards some of the celebrated historical personalities of their time. It was the service rendered by the creators of Kashmiri folk literature, who documented the commendable work of these forgotten personalities in their folk expressions and thereby left behind the unvarnished imprint of their contribution on the slates of the human-chests. In this way, Kashmir history is highly indebited to the discipline of folklore for cementing the broken links of our rich historical heritage.

Macaulay penned a famous passage upon the nature of history which could aptly be turned into modern American phraseology. According to him there was no place for commoner in Gibbon's, Robertson's historical realm. They left out the lonely life of the plain people, which only the historical novelists had therefore touched. A truely great historian would reclaim those materials the novelist has appropriated". This assertion of Macaulay contain good amount of truth in context of Kashmirs historical legacy. Not only Kalhan, but Hassan, the distinguished historian of our times in order to ensure the chronological sequence of his historical narrative took enough help from different categories of our folk-literature. In sharp contrast to the historical narrative, in folk literature "society", according to Nevins, is shown from the highest to the lowest, from

the royal cloth of the state to the den of the outlaw, from the throne of the legate to the chimney corner"[31]. It breaks up the illimitable detail of the past into simple and the comprehensible units. It is folklore which preserves, transmits and translates all that which though important in its own right has not attracted the attention of chroniclers and historians for obvious reasons as by and large history, as pointed earlier, has always been the hand maid of the powers at the apex, with a slight variations here and there. It is this throng which has kept the wheel of history moving at the cost of sweat end blood. "Folklore", thus according to Saqi, "is not only the expression of life but is the life itself which one lives and breaths. It is the embodiment of peoples innocense nourished by the tears. It is the real spokesman of miseries, misfortunes, mirth and merry making of masses"[32].

As already mentioned that the age under review was a period of great crises and the state being aware of the magnitude of the peoples discontent, it used every devise to demoralise people from expressing their heart felt feelings against the corrupt practices of the official agencies. But inspite of, every exercise of official restriction, people symbolically expressed their sad plight through innumerable proverbs, folk sayings, songs and Bhānd Pēthers[33]. For example

i. Bate Bate Pyāde Pate
ii. Ēasas Kūṯha Tchey Yō Te Ēehi Pāṯha Dṙeyvō
iii. Yed Dagh Che Bed Dagh

i. (The entire produce of the peasant is a state monopoly
ii. The illegal exaction saves the peasant from the official wrath.
iii. A tip to corrupt officials is a source of comfort).

These proverbs not only depict the official oppression and the corrupt behaviour of the rapacious revenue officials, but they reveal the imprints of the Kashmiri mentality which was the indirect outcome of the inhuman principle of governance. There are hundred of such sayings which reflect the mood of the people and the pulse of the period.

Every piece of literature (both creative and folk) mirrors the pulse of the age in which it is produced and the saying seems equally justified when applied to the domain of popular literature of Kashmir. There is no doubt, that we find negligible references regarding the social protest or peasant revolt in our historical literature for obvious reasons. But the serious examination of Kashmiri folk literature in general and the *Lari Shah*[34] and *Bhanda Pether* in particular provide enough clue to suggest that the peasantry demonstrated their anger and protest on different occasions and the title of *Zulum Parast* as suggested by some, of course, fall short of qualification. The different pethers, like *Raza Pether, Derze Pether, Angrez Pether* and *Gresy Pether*, though apparently look Comic-humerous productions, but at bottom, these artistic pieces contain strong sense of protest and satire against the corrupt and merciless system of autocratic rule during the period of our study.

We in the present dissertation, attempted with utmost care and alertness to study the pieces of Kashmiri folk literature in conjunction with other established historical sources. Only those literary creations were selected for study which had less imaginary appeal and affect and which offered an objective insight into the variegated aspects of Kashmiri social life. A vast mass of folk material embodied in number of folk tale collections has been left out from the domain of research pursuit on the ground that the

researcher, inspite of the hard efforts, could not ascertain the exact or probable periodicity of the creation and the corresponding related event. Thus an effort was made to accommodate only those literary compositions which were found in tune with the niceties of historical research.

It is with this intention that we have humbly attempted to evaluate different forms of Kashmiri folk-literature as a source for studying the different facets of Kashmir society. The study attempts to cover all shades of Kashmiri society (1819-1947). An attempt has been made in the following pages to study the folk literature not as a literary genre but as a document and a source of historical literature.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. See Peter Burke, ***History and Social Theory***. p.6. Also refer Goff Le Jacques and Nora Pierre – ***Constructing the Past***, p.4.

2. L. Stone, ***The Past and the Present***. 1981, pp.3-5.

3. P.Burke, ***New Perspectives on Historical Writing***. p.223.

4. Refer Braudel, F. ***History and Sociology***. (English Trans.) in his ***On History***. pp.64-66.

5. See D. C. Sharms, ***Kashmir Under the Sikhs***. p.270.

6. Refer Parimu, ***History of Sikh Rule in Kashmir***. p.287.

7. A gallant Dogra military official, whose conquest of Ladakh, extended the political influence of Dogra well beyond the Zojilla pass, which separates Kashmir Valley from Ladakh region. See Cunningkam, ***Ladakh***, p.218.

8. Jammu and Kashmir State came into existence in 1846 after the first Anglo-Sikh war of 1845-1846 which immediately followed by a treaty known as 'The treaty of Amritsar', concluded on 16 March 1846 which conferred Gulab Singh's right of being the first ruler of the state and the title of Maharaja, the emblem of sovereignty was conferred upon him. The treaty stipulated the formation of new state by transfering the territories lying between the Ravi and the Indus rivers 'for ever, in independent possession', to Gulab Singh and his natural male descendants. For his active support and co-operation that the Gulab Singh rendered to further the interests of the English Company during their hour of need, as an act of generosity and gratitude, they gifted away the entire Kashmir territory to Gulab Singh against the paltry amount of 75 Lacs of Nanak Shahi rupees. Iqbal, the philosopher poet of the Sub-continent, lamenting the establishment of a Dogra rule bemoans as under:

   دہقان و کشت و جوے و خیابان فروختند

   قومے فروختند و چہ ارزان فروختند

   (Their fields, their crops, their brooks, even the peasants in the vale, They sold, they sold all, alas! How cheap was the sale(!)

   See for details G.M.D. Sufi, ***Kashir***, Vol.2, p.768; Rasheed Taseer, ***Tahriq Huriyat Kashmir*** (Urdu), Vol.1, p.50. Also refer K.M.Panikar, ***The Founding of the Kashmir State***, p.126. It was first published under the title of ***Gulab Singh*** in 1930.

9. Gwasha Lal Koul, ***Kashmir Then and Now***, 8th edition, p.89. See also Dilip Kumar Gosh, ***Kashmir in Transition***, 1885-1893, pp.139-143.

10. It is one of the genres of Kashmiri folk songs. The detail fallows in the next chapter.

11. The most inhuman practice according to which the male members of the rural society of Kashmir were driven out forcibly from their families to work as

porters to facilitate the mobility of Sikh and Dogra troops to distant hazarding spots of military strategy during the period under study. See for details Ishaq Khan's essay - 'Some Aspects of Corvee', published in Research bi-annual. Also refer Robbert Thorp's ***Kashmir Misgovernment***, p.38, Lawrence, ***The Valley of Kashmir***, p.411.

12. Folk plays presented by the ***Bhands of Kashmir***. The detail fallows in the following chapter.

13. ***Rov***. Dance based Kashmiri folk song, generally sung on festive occasions and on other socio-religious occasions.

14. ***Wanvun*** also forms as one of the important category of Kashmiri folk songs. it is generally sung on marriage occasions and related functions. The detail follows in the next chapter.

15. Ginsberg, ***Sociology***, p.153.

16. Anderson and Parker, ***Society***, p.34.

17. Allan Dundes, ***The Study of Folklore***, pp.167,243 and 261.

18. Golf and Nora (ed) ***Constructing the Past***, p.152. Also see Hellowells, ***Myth, Culture and Personality***, p.548.

19. Pushp, *'Freedom in Kashmir Verse'*, article published in ***Freedom Movement in Kashmir***, Kashmir University.

20. BurKe, P. and Porter, R. (eds.) ***The Social History of Languages***, p.109.

21. P. Burke, ***New Perspectives on Historical Writing***; Cambridge, 233-48.

22. Goff and Nora, Op.Cit, ***Introduction***, Colin Lucas, p.4.

23. Quoted in ***The Rise of Historical Sociology***, by Dennis Smith, p.11.

24. Nicole Loraux *'Extending the Frontiers of History'* article published in ***Social Science and Humanities***, France, pp.20-21.

25. Smith Dennis, op.cit., p.46.

26. Grierson and Stein. ***Hatim's Tales***, Introduction, M. Y. Taing, pp.3-4.

27. Rennier, ***History its Purpose and Methods***, p.101.

28. Quoted in ***Constructing the Past***, Goff and Nora.

29. Perkin, ***Uses of History***, p.12.

30. Stein, M.A.(Tr.) ***Rajtarangni***, p.26.

31. Nevins, ***Is History Made By Heroes?*** p.175. See also Allan Nevins ***On History***, Allan and Billington.

32. Gulshan, M. ***Studies in Folklore***, Saqi's article entitled *'Kashmiri Folk-tales – Survey and Study.*

33. See explanation in the following chapter

34. See details in the following chapter.

Researcher with Gulla Wani of Narbal Kashmir, aged 92 → narrating some invaluable folk literary pieces.

← Kashmiri girls in traditional dress presenting a *"Rov"* song.

Lari Shah (A Folk Historian) with his instrument ***"dehra"*** makes a satire on social imbalances and exploiting devices. →

Kashmiri ladies in tune with the body swing, singing marriage song ***"Wanvun"***. →

Kashmiri boat women ← busy in singing the ***"Wanvun"***.

Open air performance of Kashmiri Bhands, ready to → strike the drums. (Courtesy Cultural Academy)

A *"Rov"* dance recital by Kashmiri ladies wearing traditional ornaments and dressed in Pherans with golden work. (Courtesy State Information Department).

Shrine of Pir Dastagir Sahab Khanyar.

Pilgrims at the shrine of Dastagir Sahab looking reverentially at the relic being exhibited on the eve of annual Urs.

Exhibition of the relic at the Sufi Shrine. →

← Muslims busy in offering special ***"Naful"*** prayers to ward off the effects of the natural calamity.

Kashmiri Samavar in design. →

A house of a Zeldar near village Mattan presenting a majestic look. →

← Kashmiri wazas (Chefs) ready to start the dishes of ***wazwan***.

Women chakri singers dressed in traditional costumes playing at folk musicai instruments ***"Natu"*** → & ***"Tumbaknari"*** (Courtesy State Information Department).

Kashmiri Bhands presenting folk play ***"Angrez Pether"***→ (Courtesy Cultural Academy).

"Shikargah"famous Kashmiri folk play being performed by ← the artists of Bhagat Theatre (Courtesy Cultural Academy).

The open air performance of ***"Goseny Pether"*** by the→ artists of Bumai Bhand Theatre Sopore.

A Kashmiri peasant family busy in chatting while enjoying salty tea in Samavar. →

Kashmiri women busy in ← agricultural pursuit.

Aged Kashmiri woman wearing Pheran, Thonda qasaba and Kanawajees (Courtesy Information Department) →

A scene from ***"Bhande Pether"*** male Bhand performing the role of female character. →

← Bhands playing at ***"Surnai"*** and ***"Dhol"*** seen along with male dancers (Bachas) (courtesy Bumai Bhande Theatre).

Wrapped in ***"Pheran"*** and ***"Chadder"*** with kangri at hand an aged Kashmiri is seen well equipped to→ combat chill of the winter. (Courtesy State Information Department).

Surrounded by village crowd, Bhands presenting → ***"Gujjar Pether"*** (Courtesy Cultural Academy).

← Artists of Kashmir ***"Dambali"*** theatre presenting the dambali item (Courtesy Cultural Academy).

Bhands of National Bhande theatre wathora widening the → ***Bhande Ring***. (Courtesy Wali Mohammad Khoshbosh)

Aged Kashmiri Pandit woman dressed in Pandit cut pheran and qamarband (Courtesy State Information Department).

Kashmiri Samavar in almond design.

Folk Dambali performers with the ***"Bhande Alm"*** (Courtesy Cultural Academy). →

Taking a repeated circular turn, Dambali actors start ← for performing the stick skills (Courtesy Cultural Academy).

Zenpana a relic of the past, villagers seen to see off the bride(Courtesy Altaf Ahmad of Kokernag). →

CHAPTER Second

Folk-Lore - Origin, Definition And Classification

UNIVERSAL COMPUTERS

Origin of Folklore

Although folklore is probably as old as mankind, the term "folklore" is of comparatively recent origin[1]. By the middle of nineteenth century, Europeans had started a debate on the "haves" and "have nots" under the influence of German socialists. Accordingly and simultaneously the English antiquarian W.J. Thomas coined the word Folklore in 1846 with the purpose of looking into the "have nots" or economically lower classes. In the year 1846 William Thoams, using the name Ambrose Merton, wrote a letter to *The Athenaeum* in which he proposed that a "good Saxon compound, Folklore", be employed in place of such labels as Popular Antiquities and popular literature[2]. William's conception of folklore and his essentially enumerative definition of folklore include among other things manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, and so on of the olden times[3].

Early Folklore Studies

Interest in what would now be called folklore had, of course, existed long before the subject acquired its modern name. The works of Herodotus, Livy and Pliny contain references to popular beliefs and practices in ancient Greece and Rome[4]. In sixteenth and seventeenth century in England, lively descriptions of traditional ceremonies, domestic and communal, occurred quite frequently in books primarily conserved with

other matters. Among these may be mentioned Philip Stabbe's, "Anatomie of Abuses" (1583), Robert Burton's "Anatomy of melancholy" (1621) and H. Hission's "Memoirs and observations in his travels over England", it was first published in France in 1698 and translated into English by J. Ozell in 1719[5]. The first important work on the general subject of folklore was "Antiquitates Vulgares", or, "The Antiquities of the common people" (1725) by the British Clergyman and antiquary Henry Bourve (1696-1733) which was largely an account of popular customs in connection with religious festivals. In 1777 the British Clergyman and Antiquary John Brand (1748-1806) published observations on the popular Antiquities of Great Britain, which became the standard British work on folklore[6].

In Germany, the philosopher Johann Gottfried Von Herder and the philologists Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm did pioneer work in folklore7. Herder published a valuable collection of German folk songs in 1778; the Grimm brothers made the collection of folktales "kinder - Und Haus" - marchan and household stories (1812-15) and Jacob Grimm compiled Dentsche Rechtsal Tertomer (1828) and Dentsche Mythologie (1835); it was latter on translated into english under the title of "Teutonic Mythology"[8] (1882-88). The serious study in the domain of folklore began with the dawn of the current century. With the establishment of folklore societies in different parts of the world, scholars began to take interest in the subject and within a short period of its history the subject assumed the status of an independent branch of knowledge.

Definition of Folklore

Debates about how folklore should be defined[9] have been waged continuously ever since the word was coined in 1846 by William Thomas. Most definitions concern the "lore" but some concern the "folk"[10]. Lore – the materials of folklore rather than the people who use the materials – has been described in terms of origin, form, transmission, and function. However, there has been no widespread agreement among folklorists about what folklore is[11]. Mac. Edward Leech sees folklore as "the accumulated knowledge of homogeneous, unsophisticated people"[12]. E.S. Martland defines it as anthropology dealing with the psychological phenomenon of uncivilized"[13]. G.W. Boswel defines folklore "as the unwritten history of ancient societies preserved in the minds of the people and handed down through ages by the medium of language or practise"[14]. In the International Encyclopedia of the social sciences, the term folklore has been defined as under:

> *"Folklore means folk learning, it comprehends all knowledge that is transmitted by word of mouth and all crafts and techniques that are learned by imitation or example as well as products of those crafts"*[15].

But A.Taylor, an eminent American folklorist has succeeded to great extent in defining the term folklore. His definition according to Mazharul Islam[16] is the only one which seems more rational than all others, though this also does not cover all points and lacks in may respects. He defines:

> *"Folklore is the material that is handed on by tradition, either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. It may be folk songs, folk tales, riddles, proverbs or other materials preserved in words. it may be traditional tools and physical objects like fences or knots, hot cross buns, or Easter eggs; traditional ornamentation like the walls of troy; or traditional symbols like the Swastika. It may be traditional procedures like throwing salt over ones shoulder or knocking on wood. It may be traditional beliefs like the notion that elder is good for the ailments of the eye. All of these are folklore"*[17].

After studying the different definitions of folklore, it may be plausible to express that folklore is the creation of civilization, the creation of the people who live in particular geographical area, share the same language, culture, mechanism or livelihood and living conditions, whose way of life and traditional heritage are bound by a common identity. It is transmitted orally or through one written process[18] from one generation to other and from one country to other. It exchanges its position from oral to written traditions with the advancement of knowledge in that society. The knowledge in the folklore is the result of experience, experienced by persons, community or society as a whole. The individual gains knowledge through experience and when experience and knowledge is combined together it voices the same feeling of the society. This feeling gets its expression in the elements of folklore. In other words we may say that the creation of an individual when accepted by the society as its own wealth,. it becomes folklore[19]. The elements of folklore are social products. They are created, retained and transmitted by the folk and as such it stands as the true mirror of the people and the society – not dead like a piece of glass but a living one[20].

Folk Literature

Society as an integrated collectivity of human beings possess the remarkable property of self expression[21]. The experiences gained by the community or the society when find spontaneous expression with some degree of aesthetic and artistic skill, it is termed as folk-literature[22]. Like creative literature, folk literature too has two broader categories – prose form and poetry form. Prose literature include folk tales, myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, animal tales, household tales, numskull tales, ghost stories, anecdotes, folk dramas, allusions, proverbs and riddles[23]. The other forms like ballads,

songs, lullabies, rhymes, folk metaphors, parody and poetic sayings come under the category of folk poetry. Folk literature forms an important element of folklore. Out of twenty one definitions of folklore given in the standard dictionary of folklore, eighteen definitions treat entire folklore as folk literature[24]. It has been observed that most part of the folk literature is generally being created and passed on by word or mouth. It has more social commitment than individual creative literature. While creative literature register, overall, the experiences of an individual, folk literature documents the entire society. Being the product of the society, it describes the society and the age itself[25].

Kashmiri Folk Literature in Tradition

Right from the distant past, Kashmir has been the seat of great learning[26]. Besides, having contributed enormously for the development of ancient Buddhist and Hindu literature and philosophy, it has at its credit, of having initiated a remarkable work in the field of folk literature, particularly in folktales[27]. But due to the lack of authentic historical record, it is rather difficult to reconstruct with some degree of accuracy the history of Kashmiri folk literature which it is believed had also a written tradition[28].

It is believed that Kashmir because of its rich cultural past, particularly in religious sciences and artistic expressions became the fountain head of the (Asian and latter European) tale treasures[29]. The most frequently quoted evidence to support this notion is the famous "Pachatantra"[30], a collection of fables supposed to have been composed in Kashmir[31].

Another equally important work in this written oral tradition is the *'Brihat Katha'*[32], which according to Grierson was written in the Paisachi language, spoken by

the Pre-Aryan people of the Kashmir. Scholars opine that the work might date back between 700-400 B.C. *Gunadhya*[33] is said to be the compiler of this great tale collection. The original collection is said to have been in seven volumes. Six are believed to have been consumed by fire and the extant volume, the last one, is believed to have been used as the basic material by latter collectors.

In the eleventh century, the Kashmiri version of the *Brihat Katha* is revealed to have been used by *Kshemendra*[34] and *Somadeva*[35]. The former has left a commendable work in verse under the title of *Brihat Katha Mangari*[36], the Bouquet of the Great Romance. The latter whose style is simple and elegant has written what is almost a master piece – The *Katha Sarit Sagar*[37]. For the life of the middle classes the *Katha Sarit Sagar* is an invaluable source of information.

Towards of the second half of the nineteenth century, Kashmir became abundantly exposed to European adventurism[38]. Their arrived a roll of European explorers, missionaries and administrative experts who played distinguished role in eradicating ignorance, poverty and disease, which had eaten the very roots of Kashmiri society[39]. Among other things which occupied the attention of these zealous humans, language and literature received high impetus at their end[40]. To have an accurate and objective insight into the behavioural patterns and the life style of common Kashmiris, these sensible souls began to study and discover the most authentic and reliable source of information i.e. folk literature. They believed that the literature of any society acts as a true mirror of that society[41]. It was with this intention, of course, that these people seriously undertook the job of collecting the different categories of folk literature.

During the period under review, the attention of common Kashmiri towards the richness and fertility of folk literature was drawn by J.H. Knowles[42], an European missionary. He was the first missionary scholar who brought out a comprehensive collection of Kashmiri folk tales under the title of *Folk tales of Kashmir*[43]. The same author penned down yet another book of great literary merit entitled *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings*[44]. Though the work suffers from variety of handicaps, but on the whole, its merit from the stand point of socio-literary history hardly gets minimised.

After Knowle's collection of Kashmiri proverbs and tales no other work on Kashmiri folk literature made its mark upto 1937. In the year 1937, Aurel Stein[45] and Grierson[46] brought out a small collection of Kashmiri folk tales under the title of *Hatim's Tales*[47]. Encouraged by the pioneering work of European missionaries and scholars, some sensible Kashmiris also undertook the job of collecting Kashmiri folk tales. In 1955, one of the famous progressive Kashmiri writer Noor Mohammad Roshan[48] published a collection of thirty folk tales under the title of *Poshi Ther*. After Noor Mohammad Roshan yet another Kashmiri poet Shambu Nath Bhat Haleem[49] edited the collection under the title of *Bala Yar*. The collection contained six tales.

The first Kashmiri publisher Noor Mohammad of Noor Mohammad and Sons Publishers[50], deserves extraordinary credit for bringing out a series of low caste folk literature publications. He succeeded in regenerating the literary taste among the urban and rural Kashmiri people. Another work entitled "The Wit of Kashmir" was published by Sudarshan Kashmiri. The book contains a nice collection of allusions, sayings and proverbs.

Under Prof.Mohi-ud-Din .Hajini[51], Kashmiri folklore studies received new impetus and momentum. Conscious of the histro-literary value of folk literature, Prof. Hajini undertook serious scholistic work and published two important books *Kēshri Nasrech Kitāb* and *Luka Ras*.

With the establishment of Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in 1958, the job of collecting different genres of Kashmiri folk literature was taken very seriously. Untill recently, the organisation besides having published special folklore numbers of *Sheeraza* and *Hamara Adab* has brought out ten folk songs collections and nine folk tale collections[52]. In addition to this two separate works on allusions, and sayings were also carried out in the recent past[53]. Inspired of the Academy's commitment of preserving the rich cultural treasure, some independent and voluntary literary organisations[54] also came forward and dedicated their organisational journals for Kashmiri folklore studies.

With the opening of the Kashmiri department in the University of Kashmir, there started multiple of scholarly activities in the domain of folk literature. The department organised three day National Seminar on folklore and the papers presented by distinguished scholars were latter on published in a book form. The papers cover wide variety of themes on Kashmiri folklore and popular literature.

In the present times, serious efforts are being made by number of Kashmiri scholars and writers to study and analyse this branch of knowledge from wide range of academic perspectives. The scholars, who regularly contribute to the discipline of folklore studies include among others Som Nath Dhar, S.L. Sadhu, M.L. Saqi, Mohd.

Ahsan Ahsan, Prof.Manzoor Fazali, J.L. Handoo, Lalita Handoo, G.N. Nazir, G. N. Aatish, Dr.M. Ashraf, Gulshan Majeed, Shaad Ramzan and Farooq Fayaz.

Some Major Genres of Kashmiri Folk Literature

Generally the literature of every language comprise of two main expressions: Prose and Poetry. But the distinctive quality of the folk literature right from its inception has been that the two expressions run side by side. Whatever has been passed down from one generation to another in the form of poetry has been widely termed as song and the one transmitted orally in the form of prose has been described as *Katha*, *Daleel* or Story[55]. The literary form which contain the merits of the two in a combined artistic style is termed as *Daastan*[56]. However, when we seriously study the three major forms of folk literature, we come across certain marked variations which reveal the inherent peculiarities with which the three are endowed with. In order to have an objective and indepth understanding of Kashmiri folk literature, an attempt is made here to mention some of the major and distinctive categories of the popular literature of the Kashmiri language.

a) Luka Katha (Folk Tales)

The prose narrative having all elements of traditional story preserved through human memory transmitted orally or in the written form from one generation to another by professional story tellers or common folk come within the broader category of folk tales[57]. It usually begins with a reference to the unknown teller who is said to have heard it in the recent or distant past.

The term folk tale has often been used in english language in a sense wide enough to include all kinds of traditional narrative. It has been applied to such diverse

forms as the religious myths of primitive people, the ordinary fairy tales, animal tales, and the elaborate frame stories of the Arabian Nights[58]. In Kashmiri prose narrative, we have, as in other developed languages, wide variety of folktales. These include: Pādshah *Katha*, *Pari Katha*, *Janwar Katho*, *Bodha Katha*, Chērey *Katha, Shurey Katha* etc. These stories are primarily told for amusement, psychological comfort and the regulation of the socio-ethnic system. Kashmiris inborn fondness for story telling and listening can be discerned from the folk sayings like *Katha* Kutāliy or *Katha Garey*, which suggest that all Kashmiris posses the skill of creating tales.

b) Luka Pēther

This is a traditional dramatic presentation enacted by professional Bhands[59] or minstrels either on the rough stage or in open air. The Bhands perform these plays before the audience during the Urs days of distinguished saints and Rishies[60]. The *Pēthers* are enacted for dual purpose of delight and information. The plot of these plays are crafted so typically that these often make the Vulgarities of the inhuman and oppressive officials the target of their satirical strike. This is said to be the only and most popular form of Kashmiri folk theater, which according to ancient chronicles was popular even before the period under study[61]. There are ample evidences available which suggest that these plays have come down to us in their original form as every effort was made by these professional bhands to preserve the original texts with least chances of interpolations and distortion[62]. The different *Pēthers* like *Rāza Pēther*, *Darza Pēther*, *Wātal Pēther*, *Gosen Pēther* and *Angrez Pēther* are current even today and are displayed during harvest and the festival days.

c) Zarb-ul-Misl (Proverbs)

Not to talk of language, but the dialects, spoken in any geographical part of the globe are replete with this kind of folk expression[63]. To put it in the words of J.C. Messenger, "Proverbs are by far the most numerous and the most frequently employed of these forms of verbal art", Kashmiri language is fortunate enough as it abounds in the folk material like proverbs. It does not only provide an objective clue of Kashmiris wit and wisdom, but it also reflects the different dimensions of collective Kashmiri psyche and the distinctive mentality of the people as well. The Kashmiri sayings like *Sher Singhun Draag, Badri Nathan Adri Mohar, Baga Shuhun Daftar, Salam Shuhun Sotch* help in unfolding the revealing secrets of the period under reference. The proverbs like *Wozeli Kani Tsop Kadun, Pushuk Ti Nai Tsholuk Ti Na, Drāgg Tcheli Dāg Tchelini*, provide the striking insight into the deplorable condition of Kashmiri peasantry at he hands of rapacious revenue officials.

In Kashmiri language, there are two words in currency for proverb – *Kahavat* and *Zarb-ul-Misal*. The word Kahavat literally means "a saying", 'Misl' is derived from the Arabic word Masal or Misal, which means being like, equal, resembling. It signifies a proverb, a parable, an apologue, and an example, as well as a comparison, a simile and a metaphor. The two terms are used interchangeably in Kashmiri language. Both are used to signify proverbs of all the sorts including those which are simple maxims, not depending on any comparison or similarity.

Proverbs are traditional sayings which express truths or make comments briefly and pointedly. The popularity and repeated use of a proverb helps it greatly in bringing out an idea distinctly and forcefully in a few words. In the words of M.J. Herskovits,

"Proverbs are used to give point to some well meaning advice; to rebuke or praise a friend; to put an enemy in his place; to emphasis commendation or affection; to ridicule or blame".

d) Pretche (Riddles)

Riddles as in other languages, constitute an important branch of Kashmiri folk literature[64]. But like their counterparts in other Indian languages, they have received little attention from researchers and the folklorists. As is well known, the Kashmiri tradition of riddles is not of far distant origin, but we find references in Kalhana's *Rajtarangni* which show that riddles were used in ancient Kashmir for ritual exercises[65]. Riddles, like proverbs, make abundant use of metaphors; but while clarity of the comparison is essential for the proverbs, in the riddle it is concealed. The interest in the riddles depends largely upon the surprise which is caused when the unexpected similarity is revealed by the answer. For example:

1) Āav Te Asān Drāw Ti Wadān.
2) Yaām Zāv Tām Khot Kēnī Peth.
3) Manz Bāg Saras Dazān Nār.[66]

1) With the smile it came and weeping it left. (Snow)
2) The movement it was born, it straight way went to balcony (upstairs) (Smoke)
3) A flame amid lake (Samavar).

Because of their recreational and educational features, riddles are very significant from the sociological and the psychological point of view. Their great variety of contents and themes make them most interesting and inspiring subject of study. Like proverbs riddles also form an integral part of the peoples culture and tradition.

Astūr te Rivāyitche (Myths and Legends)

The term myth which apparently looks very simple due to its brevity has however, proved most confusing and controversial one. Many writers on folklore use the term myth to designated aetiological stories explaining the origin of animal or human traits, customs and beliefs, and gods and heroes[67]. Miss Burne in her Handbook of Folklore, for example, prescribes the term even for stories accounting for the origin of prehistoric monuments[68] and local and personal names. Such a use of the word myth is based on the view of anthropologists and folklorists like Sir James Frazer, Sir G.L. Gomme and W.R. Halliday who regard myths as "the science of a prescientific age". To use Gomme's words[69]. Lord Raglan and many other scholars define myth as narrative linked with rite[70]. The assertion made by Raglan applies correctly on the myth, extant in Kashmiri. All Myths, which we have in our folklore are almost all religious and rite oriented. According to Malinowski, "Myths are regarded not merely as true, but as venerable and sacred. They are told when rituals to which they refer are to be performed, or when the validity of these rituals are questioned"[71].

Legends

Legends are believed to be true and often contain important factual information[72]. They are not privately owned, told in any stereotyped way, or magical in their effect. In every village and town of Kashmir some stories are told which are believed to describe real happenings. These concern remarkable men of the past, ruins or movements which may be nearby, place names, political events and the beginning of certain customs and practices[73]. Often these stories have been found with core of historical fact, but around that fact so much traditional fictitious matter seems to have been collected that it looks impossible to separate the fact from the age long addition of

the fiction. In short, the term legend is now used for any narrative which is supposedly based on fact, with an intermixture of traditional materials, told about a person, place or incident. In Kashmiri we have good number of legends in vogue. These legends have stood against the test of the time and these, of course, have helped in linking the broken knots of Kashmir history.

Luke Bēth (Folk Songs)

From a thematic and a structural point of view, folk songs form the most important branch of Kashmiri folk literature[74]. In all probability it outnumbers in volume any other branch of folk literary material. It is rich in content and seems to more alive and in greater vogue than the folk tale or the ballad in all manner of situations – as a means of amusement in educating the young; to sanction institutionalised behaviour, in performing religious rituals and ceremonies; and to give point and odd colour to ordinary conversation.

The term folk song is not so simple to define. There exists striking difference among the folklorists with regard to the nature of folk song. Cecil. J. Sharp, the great collector of English folk songs define it as "The Song created by the common people as against the song which has been composed by the educated[75]. But it is an agreed fact that the circumstances of origin of most of the songs are not ascertainable. The latest researches in the field have paved some way for ascertaining the periodicity of a given folk song with the help of the linguistic lab skills. To decide whether a song is a true folk song or not, one should rather consider its degree of integration with the culture of the folk. If it is integrated with the cultural pattern, it should be regarded as a folk song, whatever its ultimate origin be.

The indepth study of Kashmiri folk literature tends to suggest that there exists variety[76] of folk songs in Kashmiri folk literature. There are special songs connected with different occupations, festivals, seasons and social occasions. Besides these there are *Manzeli Bēth*[77] (lullabies) *Gindan Bēth*[78] (play songs) *Chakri Bēth*[79] (choral songs) *Nenda Bēth*[80] (weeding Songs) *Wanvun* (wedding songs) *Rov Bēth* (festival songs) *Pehely Bēth* (shepherd songs) *Lari Shah* and others. The wide range of songs mentioned are sung to different melodies, and infact, the melody provides the best clue to the recognition of the type. A close examination of the genre reveals that Kashmiri folk songs are usually intensely subjective; its forms are varied and simple, mostly a four line stanza with a refrain intended to suit numerous situations in life[81]. The entire folk song material may be grouped under the following heads:

a) Watchun

Kashmiri *Watchun*[82] is more similar to Hindi geet both from style and thematic point of view. It generally comprises of seven or eight stanzas and each stanza contains four lines followed by a refrain called *Voj* at its end. This form is usually used to express mystic experiences, delicate sentiments of women and most particularly the heart strike emotional outbursts. This type of song contains abundant of information regarding the social composition, family crises and domestic strains to which Kashmiris in general and the women folk in particular were subject to.

b) *Wanvun*

Wanvun[83] is one of the most distinctive forms of Kashmiri folk songs. It is generally connected with the institution of marriage. The *Wanvun* songs vary in tune and content with change in situation and occasion in the entire process of marriage

ceremony. There are about scores of ceremonies connected with Kashmiri marriage on both bride's and bridegroom's side and there are special songs for each of these occasions "It is perhaps" writes J.L. Koul, an eminent Kashmiri scholar, "the oldest art forms of the folk song exclusively reserved for the fair sex[84]. Muslim *Wanvun* generally begins with the name of Allah and *Bata Wanvun* starts with the name of Shiv. For example:

a) Bismilah Kērith Hemvey Wanvunaye
Sāhiban Anjām Unoye [85].

(We begin with the name of Allah
and prey him to take it to the blessed conclusion)

b) Shiv Kālam Karith Hemvey Wanvunaye,
Sāhiban Anjām Unoye [86]

(We begin with the name of Shiv
and prey him to lead us to the blessed destiny)

This category of Kashmiri folk songs help tremendously towards understanding the different facets of Kashmiri social life. The song, throw flood of light on the institution of marriage. It will be in the fitness of things to mention here that there can be no study of Kashmiri society complete, unless there is reference to this rich genre of Kashmiri folk literature.

c) Rov

Rov[87] songs are generally associated with religious festivals and are sung most often on the birth anniversaries of distinguished mystic saints and on Idd occasions. Women folk come out of their dwellings and divide themselves into two groups in a standing position facing one another. The recitation of a song is accompanied with a light swinging body action. The stress is laid on the front toes of the feet in line with the

rhythmic mood and the movement of the song. In *Rov* songs alone, the fair sex get a free chance to ejaculate their inner heartfelt urges and aspirations.

Rov Karvei Rov Ti Nai R̄ozey ,
Rov Karvei Rov Ti Nai R̄ozey [88]

Samyvey Vigneu Rov Hai Karvey,
Sangarmālan Tchaye Lō Lō .

(Let friend assemble to recite melodious Rov Songs,
Shun solitude, come down in open to enjoy Rov,
The Son has faded, The sunlight has vanished.)

Wanvun and *Rov* are distinctly two genres of Kashmiri folk poetry in which women folk express their pleasing or displeasing state of mood, their sorrows and joys, dreams and descries, strains and stresses. These songs are the spontaneous outpourings of the subjugated and deprived women of Kashmir. These two genres are invaluable documents of the psycho-social life of Kashmiri women.

Lari Shah The *Lari Shah*[89] is the traditional minstrel to sing of natural calamities, social imbalances and political exploitation. It is slightly akin to *Shahr Ashoob*[90] of urdu poetic farm. It is the typical name for a folk ballad pungently comic-cum-satiric in text and historically speaking a popular representative to voice the people's genuine grievances. Commenting upon the historical significance of *Lari Shah*, Prof.Hajini remarks, "It (*Lari Shah*) is distinguished for its 'homely metaphor, and picturesque portrayal of ridiculous situation, in which a common Kashmiri finds himself in an autocratic regime'; and it has proved to be a source of mental consolation for the enslaved folk during the centuries past". Major portion of this form is lot in verbal transmission by the illiterate bards, nevertheless we still possess some very fine pieces in the *Lari Shah*. Hakeem Habibullah, Munawar Shah of kulsoo, and Lala

Lakhman were said to be the recognised masters of this form. The narrator of this kind of song has been defined as folk historian for his deep commitment to human welfare and social cause. We find illustrative and revealing details about administrative bunglings, economic irregularities, religious superstitions, social evils and the destructions caused by recurring natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, fires, famines and droughts. Some of the significant pieces of Kashmiri *Lari Shah* which have come down to us include prominently the one under the title of *Bunil nama*[91], *Bata Drag*[92], *Sehlab nama*[93], *Angrez Qanoon* etc. etc.

In addition to the folk songs referred above, there is a good number of baby songs, cradle songs, mourn songs and shepherd songs, peasant songs, wheel songs and working songs. A careful analysis of these songs is sure to help in understanding the otherwise hidden aspects of Kashmiri social life.

Daastan

The form is the artistic synthesis of folk tale and the folk song. It equally bears the literary merits of folk poetry and prosody. The professional story teller while narrating the story in prose pauses for a while to give the adopted tale a poetic twist. Most frequently, the song is accompanied by folk musical earthen instrument known as *Tumuk Nari*[94] to make it more attractive, impressive and melodious. A number of long classical tales are interwoven in songs appropriate to the various situations in the plot. Some of the famous Kashmiri Dastans are *Aka Nandun*[95], *Hemal Nagrey*[96], *Kral Kur* etc. etc.

During the long chilly winter nights, when heavy snow fall paralysed the entire Kashmiri life, people who enjoyed no option to amuse themselves resorted to the

listening of these romantic *Dastans*. The sweet tone of professional Dastan tellers offered an intoxicative effect to the sullen and oppressed Kashmiris, who for the time being felt relaxed amid grim and gloomy conditions of autocratic governance.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Allan Dundes, ***The Study of Folklore***, p.4.

2. The term 'folklore' coined by Willium Thomas in 1846 received wide recognition and entire popular literature, observances, practices, customs, rituals and superstitions of humans are grouped under the wide category of folklore now. See for details Archer Tailor's ***Folklore and the Student of Literature***, Vol.11, pp.216-221.

3. Allan Dindes, ***The Study of Folklore***, p.83. Also refer Stith Thompson, ***Folklore***, Funk and Wagnall's ***Dictionary of Folklore***, Vol.1, p.408.

4. Leach, Maria. ***Funk and Wagnal's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend***, Vol.1, p.66.

5. **Ibid**; p.72.

6. ***Encyclopedia of Britannica***, Vol.4, p.863.

7. **Ibid.**

8. ***Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences***, Vol.5, p.288.

9. There is a marked difference among the scholars of folklore studies with regard to the definition of folklore. There are twenty one definitions given in the "Standard Dictionary of Folklore" by Maria Leach. This clearly prove the gravity of the disagreement. Some folklorists have very incorrectly counted all practices which are traditionally oral in the domain of folklore. The assertion that "all the elements of learning that are passed through an oral tradition from generation to generation in a society belongs to the discipline of folklore has been disputed on the ground that vast material of folklore has been handed down to us in the written form. For details see Mazharul Islam – ***Folklore The Pulse of the People***, p.4.

10. The word 'Folklore' in the beginning was hyphenated one and as such it was defined separately under folk and lore. But with the omission of hyphen, the theory of defining the term Folklore separately stopped forthwith.

11. G.W. Boswel, ***Fundamentals of Folk Literature***, p.147, also see "Uses and Abuses of Folk Lore" in ***Indian Folklore***, number , p.

12. Quoted in standard Dictionary, Vol.1, p.66.

13. Dictionary of Folklore, by Funk and Wagnalls.

14. Quoted by Ben-Amos. in his article "Towards a definition of Folklore", published in Journal of American Folklore (JAV) Vol.66, p.283.

15. ***International Encyclopedia***, Vol.5, (Ed) David. L. Sills, p.497.

16. Taylor, Archer, Folklore and the Student of Literature, quoted by Mazhar-ul-Islam, Op.Cit., p.12.

17. The definition though very elaborate, yet it fails to draw a line of demarcation between folklore and folk culture.

18. As already mentioned, the entry of folklore into the written form does in no way disqualify it from being a piece of folklore. The Dundes definition has long been disputed by eminent scholars.

19. The question of anonymity or authorship has also ceased to be the determining factor of the folklore. The latest theories suggest that even a creation of an individual; if acknowledged by the society either due to its literary merit or message as its own wealth, it has no restriction of being treated as a piece of folk literature. For further details see T.F. Henderson, The Ballad in Literature, p.95.

20. For a more detailed treatment see Allan Dundes, The Study of Folklore,

21. Leaves, F. R. ***Literature and Society***, p.107.

22. M. L. Saqi, Forward, ***Kashir Luka Bath***, Vol.4, p.7.

23. **Ibid**; p.8.

24. S. Maria, Leech. Standard Dictionary of Folklore, p.48.

25. Farooq, Fayaz. ***Folk Literature as a Source of Social History of Kashmir***, paper presented in the three day national seminar conducted by the Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir.

26. P.N.K. Bamzai, ***A History of Kashmir, Political, Social, Cultural***, pp.94-95. Also see, Farooq Fayaz, Kashmir The Great Seat of Learning, **Kashmir Times**.

27. Gwash Lal, ***Kashmir Through the Ages***, p.55. For detailed references see ***Ancient India and Indian Civilization***, (Ed) Paul Masson - Oursel, Philippe Stern and Willman, pp.329-330.

28. Lalita Handoo, ***Structural Analysis of Kashmiri Folk Tales***, p.12.

29. **Ibid**; p.27.

30. Panchatantra, The "Five Threads" or "Books" deals with politics and the art of government. The researches of Johannes Hertel and the attempt of F. Edgerton to construct the original text justify one in concluding that it was a handbook of politics (niti sastra) for the teaching of young princes.

31. Benfey and Hartal both maintain that the original version of Panchatantra was composed in Kashmir about 200 BC. See Ryder: ***The Panchatantra***, introduction, pp.3-4.

32. Brihat Katha is believed to be the earliest work on Kashmiri folk tale. Scholars hold that the work might date back between 700-400 BC.

33. Gunadhya was a great sanskrit scholar who flourished in the court of King Satvahana. For more details see Durga Bhagwat, ***An outline of Indian Folklore***, p.27.

34. A notable literary figure of eleventh century Kashmir. His works were utilised by Kalhana as source for penning down his famous chronicle ***Rajtarangni***. A pupil of Abhinavgupta, he was born in a well to do family, some time towards the end of the tenth century. A. D. for details see Stein (Ed. & English Trans.) ***Rajtarangni***. P. N. K. Bamzai, ***A History of Kashmir***, pp.253-254.

35. A well versed Sanskrit scholar of eleventh century Kashmir. He has written what is almost a masterpiece, ***the Katha Sarit Sagara***, its English Translation by Tawney is available in two volumes.

36. See R.C. Temple's "Foreword" to N. M. Penzer (Ed) ***The Ocean of Story***, Vol.1, p.xii, quoted by Lalita Handoo, Op.Cit., p.34.

37. It is believed that this work was composed around A.D. 1070. Somadeva's Katha Sarit Sagara is said to be based upon the famous collection of stories Brihat Katha by Gunadhya, which is lost and no longer available. Refer ***'The Wonder That Was India'*** by A. L. Basham, ***Rajtarangni*** (Tr.) Stein.

38. After the defeat of the Sikhs in Anglo-Sikh war, European interest in Kashmir affairs increasingly redoubled. During the period of our study many European missionaries made valley their area of interest. Though in the beginning their activities were seen with doubt both by the rulers and the majority community but seing their dedication in the development of human welfare, the attitude of the people underwent a drastic change. See P.N. Bazaz's ***"Daughters of Vitasta"*** and ***"Inside Kashmir"***. Also refer History of Srinagar, by M. Ishaq Khan.

39. Bazaz, P. N. ***"Inside Kashmir"***, p.107.

40. P.N. Tickoo, ***Story of Kashmir***, p.79, Zutshi, ***Political Awakening in Kashmir***, p.158.

41. Knowls, Introduction – ***Folk Tales of Kashmir***, p.2.

42. J. Hinton Knowles, a missionary scholar, did pioneering work in the field of folklore studies by publishing two remarkable works ***"Folk tales of Kashmir"***, and ***Dictionary of Kashmiri proverbs and Sayings***,

43. The collection contains tales. The introductory part of the book is the master piece of folklore research.

44. Kashmiri Language which has a very rich treasure of folk proverbs and sayings induced the scholar missionary to undertake the job of its collection. The proverbs

and the sayings are explained in the light of linguistic principles and the literary merit.

45. An outstanding scholar of history and literature, M.A. Stain translated Kalhan's ***Rajtarangni***, in English. He came to Kashmir in the year 1888.

46. The author of the ***Linguistic Survey of India***, Grierson, managed an access to famous story teller of Kashmir Hatim Tilwoni, and collected some valuable tales, which were latter on published under the title of ***Hatims Tale***.

47. Hatim, a professional story teller belonged to Panzil Village of Pargana Lar, situated some thirty kilometers in the east of Srinagar. For details see ***Hatim Katha***, a publication of Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.

48. Noor Mohammad Roshan, a writer with progressive ideological background, left writing completely. When interviewed by the researcher, he did not reveal the reason of his disinterest in literary activities.

49. Untill very recently, he was associated with All India Radio. In sixty's he made good contribution in the folklore studies of Kashmir.

50. Prof. Rehman Rahi in one of his speeches from Radio Kashmir Srinagar said that Zaina Kadal served as great literary spot where people of great academic merit would enter into live discussions and debates.

51. Gh. Moh-ud-Din Hajini, Prof. of Arabic Language in Sri Pratab College devoted all his time towards the development of Kashmiri Language and Literature. He laid the foundation of *Koshur Adabi Markaz Kamraz*, a leading literary organisation in Kashmir. His articles published in various national and international journals are well taken in the academic circles. For details see Hajini number ***'Sheeraza'***, an official organ of Jammu and Kashmir Culture Academy.

52. Cultural Academy is said to have started a fresh project of collecting unpublished folk literature in use both in urban and rural Kashmir. The major flaw of all the collections, published by Cultural Academy is that no reference regarding source has been given while recording almost all the literary compositions.

53. In addition to different folk song and folk tale collections, Academy undertook the job of collecting wide range of Kashmiri folk sayings, allusions and proverbs. For further treatment see ***Kēshir Depety***, ***Kēshir Talmihat*** etc. etc.

54. *"Adbi Markaz Kamraz", "Maraz Adbi Sangam", "Daira Adab Delina", "Halqa Adab Sonawari"* and other literary organisations brought out special number of their Magazines and journals covering various dimensions of Kashmiri folklore. For details see ***Anhar, Hamara Adab, Sheeraza, Samanbal*** and ***Saqafat*** (Some of the prominent Kashmiri Journals).

55. See ***Rajtarangni***, Introduction by Stein, Vol.1, p.26. For further details see introduction part of Knowles ***The folk tales of Kashmir***, pp.3-5.

56. The word Dastan in Kashmiri Language has been adopted for Persian classical tales like *Yusuf Zalikha, Lila Majnun*, etc. etc. This literary form was abundantly used by Kashmiri poets during the period of our study. Various classical Persian Dastans were translated into Kashmiri Language by Mehmood Gami, Maqbool Kralwari and others. Refer Mohi-ud-Din Hajini "An Outline of the Growth of Various Forms in Kashmiri Literature", published in ***The Literary Heritage of Kashmir***, edited by K.L. Kala, pp.31-35; ***Kashiri-Adbuk Tawarikh***, Naji Manawar Shafi Shauq.

57. Lalita Handoo, Op.Cit., p.30.

58. See ***Ancient India and Indian Civilization***, Op.Cit., p.334.

59. Bhands or Bhagats form a special class of folk performers. They used to play folk dramas popularly known as Pethers on different socio-religious occasions. Bhagats or Bhands of Akingam, Wathora, Bumai, Berwah, Patan and Drogmula have received great appreciation from art critics for their excellent performances. See ***Kēshir Luka Pether***, and ***Bhand-e-Jeshan***, by M.S. Bhagat. ***Kashmir Provincial Gazetteer***, Lawrence, p.38.

60. Local mystic saints popularly known as Rishis. For details see Ishaq Khans, ***Kashmir Transition to Islam***, *The Role of Rishis*, p.36.

61. Ved Kumari, Eng. Tran. of ***Nilmat Purana***, Vol.1, p.108.

62. There is hardly any difference found in the text of the different folk Pethers, played by different Bhand groups. This is an unique example of an oral tradition, well recorded and preserved.

63. See for details, John Beams on S.W. Fallen's ***Dictionary of Hindustani Proverbs*** (edited by R.C. Temple), Benaras, 1884, cover page.

64. See M. Y. Teng, ***Luka Adab Number***, (Forword).

65. M.L. Saqi, ***Kēshir Luka Beth***, Vol.3, Introduction, p.10. Dr.Shaad Ramzan, ***Kēshiren Luka Betan Hund Intikhab***, pp.13-14. (Sahitiya Academy publication).

66. **Ibid**; p.173.

67. Sol. Tax, ***Anthropology Today***, p.328.

68. Her definition has a close resemblance with Deniel Brintions definition, described in ***The Myth of the new world***, p.109. For reference see, C.S. Bume, ***The Handbook of Folklore***, p.26.

69. Referred to by Indra Deva, ***Folk Culture and Peasant Society in India***, p.80.

70. Lord Raglon, ***The Hero***, p.120.

71. Malinowski, quoted by M. Islam, Op.Cit., p.20.

72. E. J. Lindgrem, ***The Collection and Analysis of Folklore***, p.369.

73. **Ibid**; p.385.

74. Prof. G. M. Shaad, ***Critical Survey of Kashmiri Folk Literature***, Folklore Studies - Part.I.

75. Cecil J. Sharp, ***English Folk song*** : Some Conclusions 1954 edition, 1955, p.48.

76. G. N. Nazir, "Critical Review of Kashmiri Folk Poetry paper presented in Centre of Central Asian Studies". The author provides detailed information about the different genres of Kashmiri folk poetry. M. L. Saqi, in his yet another paper throws some valuable light on some of the forms, which are not now in circulation : For example Berza Metche Hendiy Beth "***Vaan***" and others.

77. See Saqi and Nazir, "***Alav***", "***Saqafat***" and "***Sheeraza***".

78. Pardesi, Sadhy, ***Kēshir Luka Beth***, Vol.7, pp.11,14-15.

79. **Ibid**; pp.114-118.

80. Ibid; pp.127-129. Also see Saqi - ***Kēshir Luka Bath***, Vol.3, p.10.

81. K. K. Kala, ***Literary Heritage of Kashmir***, p.127.

82. It is an oldest form of Kashmiri poetry. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, the mystic poet of 14th Century Kashmir also refer to "***Watchun***" in one of his poetic compositions. Some scholars are of the view that the word has a sanskrit origin and is derived from "***Vakiyani***", a well established form of Sanskrit poetry.

83. In all probability the word "***Wanvun***" seems to be the form of ***van van*** which literally means repetition. In ***Wanvun***, Stanzas are repeated with a pause to act as a cue to the other group.

84. J.L. Koul, '*Kashmiri Poetry : Some Forms and Themes*'. ***The Literary Heritage of Kashmir***, p.88.

85. Lalita Handoo, Op.Cit. pp.14-15.

86. **Ibid**; Op.Cit., p.15.

87. See Saqi, Sadhu, Pardesi, ***Kēshir Luka Beth***, Vol.3, pp.73-77, ***Kēshir Luka Beth***, Vol.7, p.70, 81, 83, ...

88. **Ibid**; Saqi, Op.Cit, p.98.

89. Nishat Ansari, The *Lari Shah*, paper presented in the department of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir. See also Shaad, Nazir and Aatish. There is marked difference of opinion among Kashmiri writers with regard to the origin, definition and nature of *Lari Shah*. Some believe that if is a poetic genre, while others maintain, that the word '*Lari Shah*' denotes the narrator of the song. But our

research tend us to suggest that *Lari Shah* might have been a village faqir (mendicant) who hailed from ***Ler***, a village in Pulwama district. The Surname 'Shah' is still used in rural Kashmir for folk minstrel, bhand or dooms. In all probability, since the village ***Ler***, falls in a flood prone zone and during the period of our study has been subject to periodical devastation caused by securing floods due to being situated in the low lying area near *Kandizall* (a vulnerable point, in the course of river Jehlum, where breach was often caused to save the Srinagar city). Some elderly member of the 'Shah' family (professional folk singers) of ***Ler*** village might have composed a poem, describing the destructions caused by flood waters. The entire area including village ***Ler*** in the near past remained immersed under flood waters for weeks together. Secondly the consonant 'R' sound is generally pronounced as 'D' sound in both Urdu and Kashmiri. For example Sarak, is pronounced as Sadak, Aligarh is pronounced as Aligadh. *Lari Shah* is pronounced as *Ladi Shah.* When I personally visited the village '***Ler***', in the year 1997, I found some members of Shah family (professional minstrels) still living there. They even today earn their livihood from singing and sweeping.

90. It is one of the creative literary forms in Persian and Urdu. It highlights the Socio-political evils and the imbalances in the system.

91. Saqi, Op.Cit., pp.147-168.

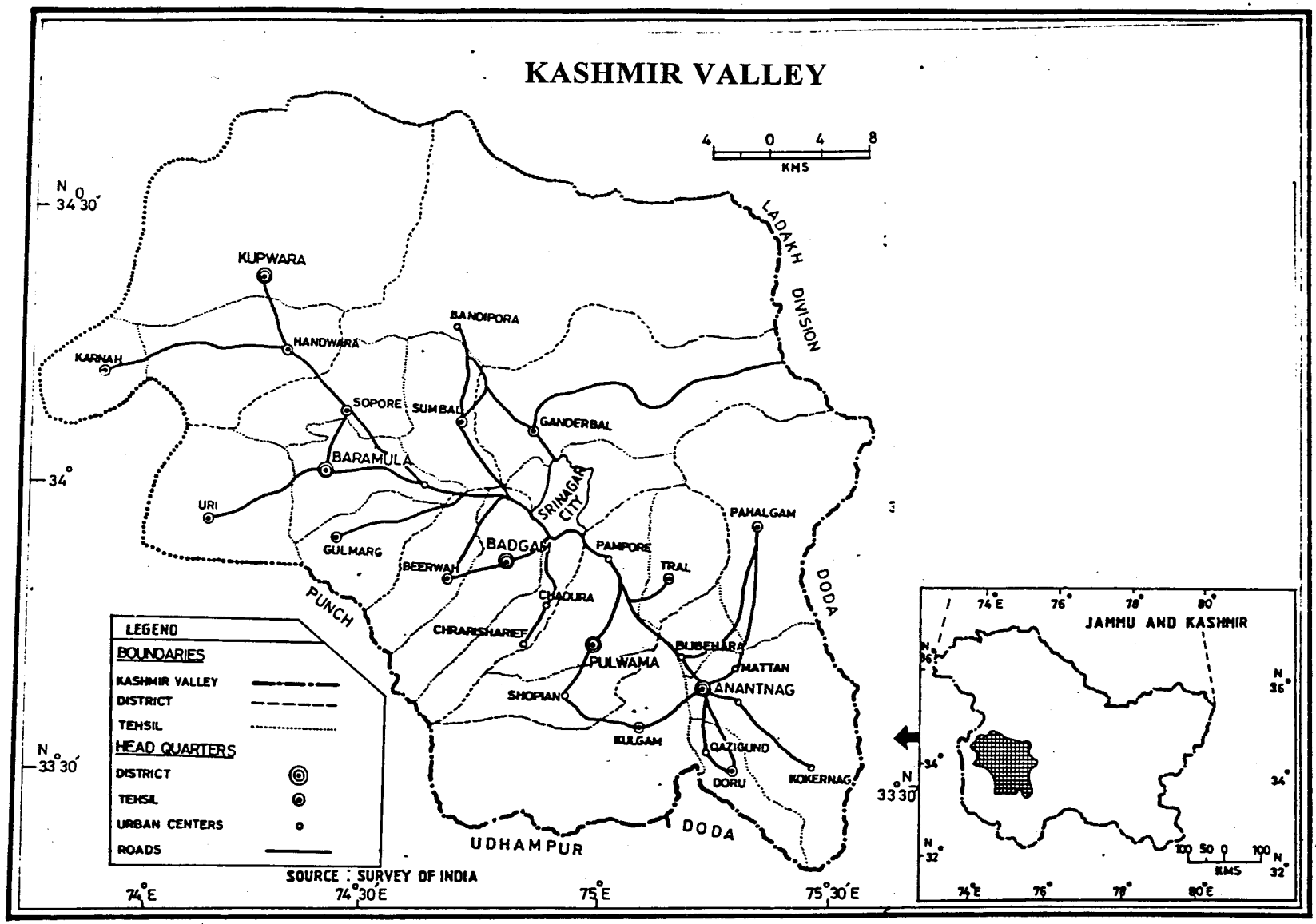
92. **Ibid.**

93. **Ibid.**

94. It is peculiar folk musical earthen instrument. It is generally being used in folk musical item *Chakri.* For details see M. L. Aima, *Folk Musical Instruments of Kashmir.*

95. This mystic oriented poetic tale has been written by many Kashmiri writers. There is no reference available regarding its original authorship.

96. See J. H. Knowl's – ***Folk Tales of Kashmir***, pp.491-504. Refer also G. A. Madhosh, "*Psychological Interpretation of Hemal Nagraj*" Audio recording available in Radio Archives of Radio Kashmir Srinagar.


KASHMIR VALLEY
4 0 4 8
KMS
N 34°30'
34°
N 33°30'
74°E
74°30'E
75°E
75°30'E
KUPWARA
HANDWARA
KARNAH
BANDIPORA
SOPORE
SUMBAL
GANDERBAL
BARAMULA
URI
SRINAGAR CITY
GULMARG
BADGAM
BEERWAH
PAMPORE
TRAL
PAHALGAM
CHADURA
CHRARISHARIEF
PULWAMA
BIJBEHARA
MATTAN
ANANTNAG
SHOPIAN
KULGAM
QAZIGUND
DORU
KOKERNAG
LADAKH DIVISION
PUNCH
DODA
UDHAMPUR
DODA
LEGEND
BOUNDARIES
KASHMIR VALLEY
DISTRICT
TEHSIL
HEAD QUARTERS
DISTRICT
TEHSIL
URBAN CENTERS
ROADS
SOURCE : SURVEY OF INDIA
JAMMU AND KASHMIR
74°E
76°
78°
80°
N 36°
34°
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100 50 0 100
KMS

Fig. 0-1

CHAPTER Third

Social Discontent And Protest As Depicted in Oral Literature of Kashmiri Language

UNIVERSAL COMPUTERS

Though the Mughal annexation of Kashmir in 1586, AD. relieved the people to some extent from the pain caused by the civil war and the religious fanaticism that Kashmir witnessed towards the end of the Kashmir Sultanate, but it sealed once for all the fortunes of political sovereignty as the sun of Kashmirs independence set behind the thick dark clouds of political gloom and social insecurity. No doubt, for short intervals, particularly in the wake of royal pleasure trips in Kashmir, people of the valley enjoyed some moments of joy and consolation, but the departure of the royal cavalcade often set the new schemes of oppression and extortion into motion. Although the historical literature portrayed the picture of Mughal governance in a relatively bright colour, but the fact remains that since the historians and the chroniclers in the medieval times were often found on the rolls of royal pay registers it was hardly expected from them that they could have painted the grey picture of their masters and patrons.

In contrast to this established trend of medieval historiographical canons, principles, we find glaring examples of public misery and agony in abundance in our folk literature, in different forms[1]. There are innumerable folk expressions in circulation in the vernicular which echo unostentatiously the oppression and the bunglings of Mughal Governors and their favourites in Kashmir. For example the folk

expressions like *Poge Mowagul*[2], Rāte *Mowagul*[3] and *Mowagul* Dēshit *getchi Farsi Tagun Bolun*[4], *Aagur Khanun Hos*[5] etc. etc., speak the magnitude of the disdain and contempt, Kashmiris had developed against the Mughal imperialism in Kashmir.

The machinations and the modus-oprendi of Mughal governance find satiric expression in one of the famous Kashmiri folk play *Mowagul Pēther*[6]. The *Pēther* with dramatic effectiveness highlights and exposes the corrupt behaviour of Mughal officialdom towards the miserable and grief stricken people.

Towards the end of the Mughal rule in Kashmir, people suffered heavily as the agents of the Mughal Governors busied themselves in making the best of the time in squeezing the last penny out of the cultivator and the trader[7]. The people had no means of seeking redress of their grievances. It is not, therefore, surprising that when a relatively, kind and noble governor was deputed to Kashmir to mitigate the distress of the people the Kashmiri bard did not miss an opportunity to appreciate the exercise.

"Hake āv Samad Phowatrin zīn[8]
Na rūd Kuni Sharaf ne rūd Kuni dīn".

[Samad (horse) came swiftly. Their remained
neither Sharief (cardinalship) nor din bigotry).

In the same fashion, during the times of Afghan rule in Kashmir (1752-1919) when valley and its people experienced worst type of political vulgarity and official vandalism, Kashmir *Bhands*[9] painted the high handedness of rapacious Afghans in the ugliest colour in one of famous Kashmiri folk play *Dirze Pēther*[10]. The play symbolically projects the helplessness of Kashmiri peasant society and unmasks the unkind behaviour of Afghan governors and their subordinate officials. The romance of

Afghan officials with beautiful *Derzes*[11] (Lady characters) depict the licentious and sensual tastes of Afghan elite, who had reached to the height of notoriety. The alien governors who had left the Kashmiri peasantry penniless by way of callous exaction, found its way into a folk ballad popularly known as *Greēsbāi te Māch Tuler* [12] (The peasant woman and the Bee) the ballad carries the refrain.

Ba day chhasay manch Tuler Vanuk Jānāwar
(I am a honey bee, indeed, a wood land denzen)

The ballad, infact, runs an exchange of woes between the honey bee and the peasant women. The honey bee confides her woe to the peasant woman as to the callous way in which the uncouth bear had forcibly taken away all her honey, while the oppressed peasant women recount the harrowing tale of how she was driven to the woods by the unrelenting tax gatherers who had left not a grain of paddy with her for the family use. A sorrowful state of affairs under Afghans has rightly been versified by a poet:

Pur Sidam Kharabe Gulshan Zi Bagwan[13]
Afghan Kashid guft ki Afghan Kharab Kared.
(I enquired of the gardner the cause of
the destruction of garden,
Drawing a deep sigh he replied, It is the
Afghan who did it!).

The Afghan cruelty reached at its climax during the governorship of Amir Khan and Jabar Khan. Their barbarity is ridiculed by the folk in the following Kashmiri proverbs.

"Amir Khāneny Chety"[14]
and
"Jabar Jande Hardes Ti Korun Wandeh"[15].

The assertion of some historians carry enough weight when they hold that they can not discern information about the different ruling houses in a systematic, coherent and in a chronological sequence in the folk literature of any society or nation[16]; but the fact also remain equally justified that folk literature in the form of songs, proverbs, riddles, allusions, folk plays and ballads, offer a penetrating insight into the multifarious facets of the human society[17]. This theory applies with equal velocity to the different genres of Kashmiri literature as well, which mirror the entire gamut of Kashmiri social life particularly at a very critical phase of its historical times (1819-1947). The fragmentary literary works if pieced together, after an objective appreciation, from the stand point of history, the effort is bound to provide a reliable, well documented and historically accurate and authentic picture of the period under review.

The Sikh rule which replaced the Afghan government in Kashmir in 1819 A.D. proved more harsher than Mughal and Afghan ruler. The illegal exactions, drain of wealth, official oppression, peasantry migration, deepening social tensions and crises, caused by way of providing incentives to the influential and the privileged sections of society, the institution of Begar (forced labour) and the religious prosecution coupled with moral degeneration constituted some of the chief characteristics of Sikh legacy in Kashmir.

Peasant Disconsolation

It will not be out of context to mention here that an alien government can only rule when it gives good administration to the subject people or is capable of using the apparatus of coercion effectively. In the context of Kashmir, the Sikh and

subsequently the Dogra rulers choose to depend on the apparatus of coercion[18]. The most painful dimension of their political philosophy was that both Sikhs and the Dogras in order to legitimize the otherwise illegitimate rule succeeded in creating a group from both Muslim and Hindu communities, who in turn, against the rich incentives, acted as the custodians of the alien rule. This privileged section of Kashmiri society would seldom miss an opportunity to fleece the people even of their meager belongings and possessions. The State being the sole proprecitor of the entire land in Kashmir, distributed big chunks of cultivable land among the local favourites of the Raj[19]. These collaborators in turn, to appease the greed of Sikh and Dogra masters, resorted to every kind of mean device to command obedience and submission from the people for the alien rule. Such was the magnitude of terror imposed by the vested groups and other cadres of official machinery that people seldom dared to protest against the serverst injustice and oppression. These sections enjoyed maximum benefits in the form of liberal land grants and the exemption from multiple of State demands[20]. The unruptured subjugation of masses to alien structure accompanied with highest degree of revenue and industrial barbarities reduced the masses to the lowest degree of penury and poverty. Moorcraft, who visited the valley in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, while giving the details of the abject poverty of the people comments:

> *"Everywhere the people were in the most abject condition, exorbitantly taxed by the Sikh government and subjected to every kind of extortion and oppression by its officers... not one sixteenth of the cultivable surface is in cultivation, and the inhabitants, starving at home, and driven in great numbers to the plains of Hindustan... The cultivators were in a condition of extreme wretchedness and the government instead of taking only one half of the produce on the thrashing floor had now advanced its demand to three quarters. The Sikhs "seemed to look upon the kashmirians as little better than cattle"*[21].

G.T. Vigne's description is hardly more favourable. He visited Kashmir in 1835. To quote him:

> *"The houses present a ruined and neglected appearance, in wretched contrast with their once gay and happy condition, and speak volumes upon the light and joyous prosperity that has long fled the country on account of shameless rapacity of the ruthless Sikhs".*[22]

According to young husband "the villages were fallen into decay. The rice ground was uncultivated for want of labour and irrigation[23]. In his *Bebujnama*, a contemporary Kashmiri poet and starist Hameed-ullah-Shahabadi, used metaphoric expressions to strike at the cruel and the oppressive devices of Sikh officialdom and the institutions. While lamenting on the lot of suppressed Kashmiris, the writer asserts:

> Bowavad virdey zabān ahle Kharāj[24]
> Dharm Kā rāj mulk ka tārāj
>
> (It was on the lips of every tax payer that
> the rule of Dharma meant the pillage of the country)

Such was the magnitude of Sikh oppression that Kashmiris often equated the wrath of Sikhs with the furry of flood waters. This is evidenced by the refrain of famous Kashmiri satarical poem *Lari Shah* under the title of *Sai Lab Nama*[25].

> Hēbat Lukan go Kēty geyi mār,
> Sēhlab Singh go zōrāvār.
> Mandōri geyi tal tchor Pōr,
> Vadnes Khērynei bedy thekedar,
> Sēhlab Singh go zōrāvār.
>
> (People became frightened to see the furry of the flood water,
> Scores of men and women died unnoticed!
> The "flood Singh" (satarically referred to Sikh oppression)
> caused unimaginable loss of life and property.
> Towering mansions of rich and wealthy immersed under flood water,
> Wealthy contractors became paupers in a twinkle of an eye.
> The "flood Singh" brought unimaginable loss to life and property).

Kashmiris, who during the period under review experienced worst type of inhuman treatment at the hands of Sikh governors and their officials, no doubt, failed to register any protest against the oppressive measures of the rule, but the indepth study of one of the major categories of Kashmiri folk literature documented their discontentment in number of ways. The oral history, which still awaits tapping, will further substantiate our argument.

It is true, that when in the state of utter social insecurity and official wrath, the down trodden and victimized people thought it impossible to fight against oppressive masters, the peasants avenged their oppression by joining hands with the enemies of their oppressors or acted as mute spectators of their downfall[26]. Thus a common saying in Kashmir:

"Akis dazān dēr te baiyakh vushenāvān athe"[27].

(A mans beard is burning and another is warming his hand upon it).

It is because of this psycho-social trait that Kashmiris came to be called as *Par dhar* (the enemy's ally).

Even amidst utter gloom, people could not miss the opportunity to appreciate the benevolent exercises of those associated with power during the oppressive Sikh rule. Governor, Col. Mian Singh (1844) who adopted number of welfare schemes for the flood and famine stricken people of Kashmir won great applause from the folk, as is recorded in number of Kashmiri proverbs. He was given the title of "Mahan Singh". (The Great Sikh). When Kashmiris came to know about his gravesome murder, they

mourned his death for days together and the public concern is depicted in this verse of a Kashmiri folk song:

Kot sanā go sōn Mehan Singh,
Kot sana go son Mehan Singh [28]

(Where has gone the great Mehan Singh (Col. Mian Singh)
Where has gone the great benefactor).

This is a sufficient proof that Kashmiris were monitoring attentively all the good and the bad acts of the alien rule. What distanced them from taking any direct action was not their cowardice but during the long rule of subjugation they had developed a kind of social psyche which approved silence to outcry, submission to protest and departure to obedience[29]. This is evidenced by two Kashmiri proverbs:

"Tul Plav Te Vowath Tchelev"[30]
"Tchope Chey Rowape Senz"[31].

(take your cloths and let us run away)
(Silence is no less in value than a silver,
But if maintained, it is no less golden in value).

In presence of a band of secret agents who conveyed every bit of information regarding any development taking place, in any corner of the state and the severe punishment that would be in store for such persons, always deterred the masses from criticising openly and ridiculing directly the official atrocities. Instead, people used a mechanism which proved less harmful, it was to resort to abusive language and give nicknames to various categories of Sikh officialdom which corresponded to their mode of behaviour. The sociology of the nicknames reveal that the subjugated people often use abusive language to give vent to their suppressed emotions[32], and in the background of Kashmiri social setting, the abusive diction found in the vernicular is suggestive of the contempt and hatred Kashmiris have had against the ruthless rulers.

This is further substantiated by the metaphoric expressions of Hameed-ullah Shahabai, the contemporary sataric poet of Kashmiri who suggests peculiar names for different Sikh officials:

> *Here is the list of substitutes suggested for different revenue and other officials of the Sikh beurocracy:*
>
> *Kazib Rather* for Qanungo
> *Adawat koul* for Patwari
> *Fasad Bhat* for Harkara
> *Rishvat Baba* for Qazi
> *Shahmat Singh* for cheif police officer
> *Khalafat Razdan* for Munsif
> *Tawan Koul* for Amil
> *Dewali Das* for store keeper of grains
> *Chugli Beg* for News reporter[33].

The selection of the names for different categories of Sikh officialdom not only unmask the real anti people behaviour of these officers but these words also reflect the magnitude of disaffection and hatred Kashmiri nurtured inwardly against them. The anatomy of these metaphoric expressions indicate that Kashmiris were sensitive enough to observe the appalling heights of Sikh barbarity but the silence was maintained because of coercive acts adopted by the alien rulers to silence the otherwise restive populace. At the bottom of this outwardly intriguing silence there rested the worst type of protest and discontentment.

However, powerful the Sikhs would have been, the sources suggest that it was not possible for them to retain Kashmir without being a local supporting structure to act as props of their Raj. Hence the Lahore Darbar created a vast ring of local supporters by way of alienating[34] a mall portion of revenues of Kashmir to them. This

alienation was effected by way of granting jagirs and a dharmarth, besides declaring a host of people as 'arzi walia[35] (owners of land).

In the light of this alienation, we must not therefore, be surprised to find a good quantity of Kashmiri folk literature wherein the picture of these supporters of the Raj has been painted in the ugliest colours. A careful study of folk literature reveal that amid severe famine conditions, when the peasant and the worker was left with nothing to feed their dependents, the Sikh governors and the local aides of the Raj seldom showed favourable gestures to console the wretched people of the valley.

An extract from Kashmiri folk story entitled "Mehan Singh" shall further illucidiate our assertion.

> *"Aided by corrupt Kashmiri officials Waris Khan and Chander Bhan, and the Panjabis, Raj people collected heavy taxes from them (people). The Khalsa army behaved like an army of occupation, as it were, treating Kashmiris like so many chattels. People migrated from the valley in large numbers. The famine stricken trekkers reached Lahore, Maharaja Ranjit Singh heard their tales of woe. The exodus increased day by day"*[36]

The worst effect of the famine which occurred in the year 1832 during the time of Sikh Governor Sher Singh and which caused great damage to life and property has been tapped by the folk bard in this Kashmiri expression:

"Sher Singh - un - Drāag"

The ravages of the famine left so an indelible imprint on the canvas of Kashmiri mind that people even today feel trembled at the nostalgic recollection of the dreadful sights which Kashmiris experienced at a very critical period of agrarian crises[37].

An eye witness account of the massive devastation caused by the severity of cold, extortions of Jamadar Khushal Singh, and the great famine, which followed, is contained in one of the most touching *mathnavis* (long narrative poem) written by Khazir Shah resident of Bijbihera Kashmir, He says:

> *"Owing to the famine, cereals became scarce having been secreted by the 'godless' hoarders. The prices of eatables went up ten to fifteen times their normal price... There was no difference between high and low, haves and have nots... all were bundled in the shroud of hunger. To survive, therefore, they started hunger marches to the Punjab, many have died on the way, unwept, unbruised and unsung"*[38].

The same situation has been referred to by Sohan Lal Suri. He states that owing to the tyranny of Jamadar Khusal Singh "the people of Kashmir gathered together in Amritsar in thousands and spread out to Delhi, Calcutta and Banaras[39].

In the *Lari Shah* entitled *Bate draag* (scarcity of food) the poet narrates the pathetic tales related to the famine. The poem also highlights the carelessness of the officials who aggravated the situation beyond repairs. Here are few verses given for record and reference:

> Nāznene Sowakhnan Thāv tem kan,[40]
> Siteji tuj ā v bata dragan.
> Yiman Nai us Kensi Timav Kor Tei,
> Sarmai dar esy Tchandan vei
> Gala dār galas esi lōth tcharan,
> Siteji Tujav Bata Dragan.
>
> (O, my friend, give patient hearing to my woes!
> we have been reduced to extreme poverty by the famine.
> The people who had little in store died mercillesly,
> Even the wealthy traders were looking for a grain of rice.
> The hoarders were demanding exorbitant prices for little quantity of rice,
> We have been reduced to extreme poverty by the famine).

The valley, during the period under review also witnessed a recuring role of natural calamities in the shape of floods, famines, droughts, fires, earthquakes and

epidemics.[41] These natural disasters coupled with the callous role of Sikh and the Dogra beuracracy not only divorced the people of their meagre possessions but these calamities led to the mass exodus of Kashmiri peasantry to seek their source of livelihood in the plains of Hindustan[42]. The heart piercing tales related to these miserable events have been tapped by our bards in number of Kashmiri *Lari Shah's*. Some prominent pieces of these *Lari Shah* which contain peoples agonies include among others, *Sehlab nama*[43], *Bunil* nama[44], *Bata drag*[45], *Abe drag*[46], etc. etc. In absence of the chronicler evidence, these folk literary pieces not only provide us a detailed account of the unrecorded events of our history but these works also help us to understand and measure the quantum of human pain and misery caused by these natural calamities. Here are some of the lines given from different *Lari Shah*'s:

Kendy Zāl Khan Yeli Mutchrene av
Pehras manz Khot Navān Bāv
Edy tcely Kralepur edy vēty tsrar
Sehlāb Singh go Zorāvār.[47]
(Sehlāb Nama).

Bata myond mongemy Asad dārs,
Dapnum vole prār iftars.
Treyi pehry ore am ale thef heth,
Ilahi asi Kar bata barket.[48]
(Bata Drāg)

(When there caused a breach in the river embankment at Kandizal,
In Pohru village, there increased the demand for boats immediately.
Some people moved hurriedly to Kralapora and some ran away to Tsrar,
The "Flood Singh" took terrible turn.)
(I asked for a handful of rice from Asad dar,
He told me to wait upto Iftar (breaking of the fast in the month of Ramazan)
After a long wait, he came along with a piece of pumpkin,
O, God, forgive our sins, and help us to come out of the perilous condition).

YEAR WISE OCCURANCE OF DIFFERENT NATURAL CALAMITIES IN KASHMIR

Fires	Epedemics	Floods	Famines	Earthquakes
1850	1833	1836	1813	1828
1875	1845	1841	1831	1863
1878	1857	1858	1833-34	1873
1885	1867	1877	1864	1878
1892	1872	1889	1877	1884
1894	1875	1893	1892	1885
1895	1879	1894	1902	1902
1898	1889	1903	1918	1905
1908	1892	1905	–	1906
1913	1906	1909	–	1908
1917	1910	–	–	1911
1918	1914	–	–	1912
1921	1919	–	–	1917
–	1924	–	–	1921
–	–	–	–	1923

Sources: *Umdat-u-Tawarikh*
Tarikh-i-Hassan
Travels Vigne

A touching reference of the famine ravages has been documented in a very precise manner in these Kashmiri proverbs

i. "Akui ober Te māg, Akui faqe te drāg"[49].
ii. "Drāg tcheli te dāg Tchelan ne"[50]

i. (Even a slight appearance of cloud on the sky, gives an impression of severe cold; and the constant hunger means nothing less than a horrified famine)

ii. (Famine will go but the memories in the shape of deep wounds shall not be forgotten so easily).

These proverbs not only reflect the abject conditions of the people but these expressions give an indication about the collective social behaviour of the people, fashioned under such acute and turbulent conditions. The recuring menace of the, torrential rains which often caused floods and famines had such a tremendous psychological bearing on the Kashmiri mind that even a slightest piece of cloud on the sky would send shivers into the spine of every Kashmiri.

The condition of skilled workers in urban Srinagar was no less a horrible than their rural brethren working in the fields. The manufacturers of Kashmiri Shawl, (Which once had been the pride of Asia) had been living in such an unhygenic conditions that they often fell prey to epidemics like cholera, small pox and other diseases[51]. The institution of Dag Shawl[52] department gave a final death blow to the industry and heavy taxation imposed on the trade not only paralysed the workers but it even worsened the condition of Karkhandars[53]. Though the Shawl trade constituted second largest revenue field sector after agriculture but the conditions of the Khandawavs (Shawl bauffs) presented ghastly look. They were made to serve from

dawn to dusk for meagre wages by their wealthy Karkhanadars. The economic level of the Shawl weaver can well be gleaned from this proverb:

Siny nuhimi sowatchal
Rēny muhimi Khandevvav

(If any vegetable can not be had one can still get a mellow,
If for a girl no husband is available one can easily get a
shawl weaver for the purpose).

The attentive study of the proverbs and folk songs reveal that the majority of the workers were ill clothed, under nourished and were permanently on debt. The only spot of solace for these uncared human souls was the state of undivided Punjab. Most of these people remained for ever in Punjab and some who came back were disallowed by their masters on land and in the industry to work in the fields and the Karkhana's[54]. How the family members of the departed persons craved for the safe return of their near and dear one's is portrayed in the touching tune in these lines of Kashmiri folk songs:

Kam gander Punjāb andar Kashiri taran nā?
Kam gander Sowander sowander Kashir tarn nā?
Bara gēmety pēmety pather Kashmir tarn nā? [55]

(See! what a young and beautiful lot of Kashmiri men are languishing across
the mountains in the province of Punjab, would they every dare to come back?
They might be feeling homesick in absence of their family members!
would they ever dare to come back?)

The mass exodus of men folk to the distant lands of Punjab gave rise to number of psycho-oriented problems. During the long absence of male members, some appalling moral laxities found their way into Kashmiri family life, particularly in peasant society. These resulted in an unending process of family feuds, divorces and breaking of the traditional socio-emotionalities. There are number of folk storys

which feature the feminine frailty of Kashmiri women during the period under debate[56]. The following line from one of the Kashmiri folk poems points towards such an unwarranted dimension of Kashmiri woman:

Subheki vāvo bar me eleravō,
Nikun mōl rāt gare tchir ho āv[57]

(O, morning breeze don't cause the door open,
The father of my son had come back to home late at night).

The metaphoric expression "morning breeze" has been used for illegitimate lover who had been in the habit of visiting the house of his paramour in the absence of her husband. In addition to this there erupted number of other negative traits in Kashmiri social life in the absence of the male members.

In 1846, when the Jammu Dogras replaced the Sikh rule in Kashmir, people expected healthy change in the political behaviour of the ruling elite. But the people's expectations dashed to the ground on finding the new rulers more cruel and barbarous than the previous Afghan and Sikh masters. This state of mental agony is revealed in this proverb:

"Koli khote kol che sardei"

(Every new stream is more icy
and chilly than the previous one)

In a plain language this indicates that new rule was more harsher than the previous one. The folk expression is equally endorsed by the remarks of lieutenant colonel Torrents which he made in reference to the first Dogra ruler Maharaja Gulab Singh:

"This last state was worse than the first, for Gulab Singh went beyond his predecessors in the gentle acts of undue taxation and extortion. The (Sikhs) had taxed heavily it is true, but he (Gulab Singh) sucked the very life blood of the

people. They laid lald violent hands on a large proportion of the fruits of the earth, the profits of the loom and the work of men's hands, but he skinned the very flints to fill his coffers".[58]

Even K. M. Pannikar who served as an official of the government under the Dogras and wrote an inspired biography of the Maharaja had to admit that Gulab Singh "did not achieve his ends by methods which were always beyond criticism. He did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems which would, in ordinary life be considered dishanourable. He was trained in a hard school, where lying, intrigue and treachery were all considered part and parcel of politics"[59].

The Dogras, who claimed to have purchased the entire land along with people, livestock and the green forests from the British East India Company against the cash amount of Rs.75 Lakhs, treated the entire state as the family property[60]. Under such an obnoxious scheme of governance, we could hardly loose sight of the political philosophy drafted generally to serve the interests of the ruler. To quote Bazaz:

"They (Dogras) established a sort of Dogra imperialism in the state in which the Dogras were elevated to the position of the masters and all non-Dogra communities and classes were given the humble places of inferiors. The people of the valley were thus brought under the imperialism of the Dogras which itself was functioning as a vassal of the super imperialism of the British. But though Dogra imperialism brought nothing but misery, thraldom, physical and mental deterioration in its wake, the other imperialism did not come without some blessings. By coming under the British suzerainty the valley began to have the impact of western ideas and modern civilization which finally awakened the people to demand their birth right of independence and freedom"[61].

The colonial approach set in motion by Maharaja Gulab Singh (1846-1858) continued even with more severity during the time of his son Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1858-1885). The inhuman institution of Begar[62] (forced labour) the official barbarity, unbearable revenue exactions, rampant corruption, decline of rural and urban

economy, establishment of Chakdari[63] and waddari[64] system, the managerial hegemony of Jammu Dogras, Punjabi Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits marked the chief characteristics of Dogra government in Kashmir.

All these anti people activities in an autocratic feudal setting accelerated the process of mass migration of the victamised peasantry and the skilled workers. The dessertion of land and the loom resulted in the loss of government revenues. In order to fill up the revenue deficiencies, the Dogra government decided to bring major chunks of waste lands under cultivation and the big traces of uncultivable land were granted to the influential people of Hindu and Muslim communities. In order to attract more and more cultivators to work in the 'Chak' lands, these were kept out of the ambit of the Begar. The peasantry in order to save themselves from the wrath of begar· readily agreed to work as serf and chattels under the cruel chakdars. To work as a serf and a slave on the lands of oppressive chakdars against being carried as a 'begaree' seemed to be as an less evil for the fleeced peasantry of Kashmir. These chakdars, who were conscious of the peasantry compulsions made them to work without any halt or recess on their fields to earn for the huge sums for both chakdars and the state as well[65]. The unparallel cruelties perpetuated by these local chakdars and zamindars on the poor cultivators has been summarised very accurately by Kashmiri Bhands (minstrels) in the *Chakwali Pether*[66]. The folk drama brings into focus the cruel mechanations of chakdars and their intriguing relations with the different cadres of revenue administration. How the dual robbed the unheard and unprivileged section of Kashmiri society marks the chief feature of *Chakwali Pether*. The magnitude of the

pain caused by this institution is well echoed by the National poet of Kashmir in the beginning of the present century. He Says:

> Tati cha zamindār, kāshkār, nāngar, Teti chā bedy chakdar,
> Tati cha atha cheny range range nyametche
> Kumelyn lagan batta mar.[67]
>
> [Are there (in the next world) also zamindars, tenants, landless labours and big chakdars? Do there also the idlers enjoy the sumptuous dishes and the working class suffer for want of morsel of food)!

Yet another shocking feature of the landlordism of our period was that the dominating majority of landlords belonged to Hindu community who constituted only 20% population of Jammu and Kashmir state and not more than 10% of the Kashmir valley. The statistical information reveal that out of 44 chakdars in the Tehsil Anantnag, 31 were Hindus and only 13 were Muslims in the latter part of the 19th century. Whereas 31 Hindu chakdars held 6,892 Kannals of land, the total land under Muslim chakdars was only 3,727 kannals[68]. It will not be out of place to mention here that the Muslims who were in possession of Jagirs and chaks were guided more by their own material interests than the community interests. They along with revenue officials left no stone unturned to suck the very blood of the Muslim peasantry[69]. This class of landed elite acted as the collaborators of the Raj and thus enjoyed incalculable incentives at the cost of wretched cultivators. The general contempt and disdain against these sections of Kashmiri society can well be gleaned from different *"Luke Pathers"* and *"Larì Shai's"*. In one of the *Pethers*, a group of characters representing this landed vested class were shown as being dragged naked in the filthy lanes of Kashmiri Village, and not satisfied with the avenge and anger, the robbed peasants made them to drink the human waste in presence of the village spectators. By this

dramatic expression, the victimized tillers and cultivators infact, give vent to their suppressed emotions, which they could not have perhaps done in the practical life as even a meagre act of disobedience tentamounted to severe punishment and in some cases, the penalty was observed as death and flogging. The dramatic representation of chakdari system in the folk play can in no circumstances be dismissed as a wanton flight of fancy, but if judged from a stand point of history and sociology, it unfolds the true pain and the pangs of oppressed and humiliated Kashmiri peasantry.

Not satisfied with the system under debate, the Dogra government invented yet another coercive apparatus to fleece the downtrodden Kashmiri peasantry. The new mode of collection introduced directed the cultivators to deposit some of the state share in cash which was till now paid in kind. The Kashmiri peasants who had never been in a position of possessing the cash money, had to depend upon money lenders known as *Wadadars* for lending them the necessary money to deposit the state treasury.

Taking benefit of the cultivators helplessness and impoverishment, these *wadadars* lent them money against the heavy interests. The *wadadari* system documented the everlasting slavery of Kashmiri peasantry at the hands of greedy *wadadars*. The cultivators could not release themselves even from the ghastly hold of interest, the principal amount remained as it was. In case of non-payment of interest money, these *wadadars* purchased the grains at a very low rates. Thus, on the one hand, peasant was exploited by the state by charging exorbitant rates from the peasant for the official demand, he was also skinned rough by the *wadadars*, who charged high interest on the debt. Thus peasant was deprived of all his gains in the shape of his

produce[70]. The payment of $\frac{1}{3}$ of the land revenue in land which was known as *Mujwaza*[71] also caused much havoc among the peasantry. By snatching $\frac{1}{3}$ of the produce in kind, the peasant was left with a small quantity of produce hardly sufficient to fulfill his basic food needs and that too only for few months.

The agonising condition of Kashmiri peasantry can well be discerned from famous Kashmiri *Lari Shah* entitled *Mujwaza nama*. Here we quote some of the verses of the "Song" which mirror the scale of social discontent and human agony:

Hēv Qowadret Parverdigāran ,[72]
Yare mujawaza khot zamindāran.
Preth Tarfei voth hul halei,
Zyada gērth kornei shahran
Yare mujawaza khot zamindāran.
Kath kerhei yimav chake vāleu,
Vunis Tāmeth nafa kheyu hālieu.
Tawai phalwuk nisf kāshkāran,
Yare mujaaza khot zamindāran.
Nekhy mujwaza Shahr Tām vōlkh
Hēky man Nish Trakri peth khōluk
Yes chonān os tas esy mārān
yare mujawaza khot zamindāran.
Hāli bad gō kus kari shēdi
Gei lukan be etimedi
Patwariv lōze kari dyaran
Yāre mujawaza khot zamindāran.

(Yet again the nature has turned against us,
The state has increased the state share in kind (Mujawaza)
In every direction, people raised great hue and cry,
People even petitioned to the high authorities.]
Srinagar played active part,
The state has increased the mujawaza.
The chakdars entered into a secret alliance,
They made the plea that insects destroyed,
the crops which they had collected from the
cultivators. Thus half of the illegal demand was put
on the shoulders of the already fleeced cultivators,
The state demand in kind (mujawaza) has increased

The cultivators were made to carry the shali
(unhusked rice) to the city.
Every grain was weighed under strict security,
If even a handful of grain fell short of weight,
cultivators were mercilessly beaten.
The state demanded in kind (mujwaza) has increased.
Such was the state of economic crises that people
in the villages seldom celebrated any marriage,
people became extremely disappointed.
Patwaris made huge profits from this transaction).

Corrupt And Oppressive Officialdom

Another principal agency which had reduced the cultivators to the extreme pathetic state was the long roll of corrupt officialdom[73]. From Wazir-i-Wazarat, the top of the bureaucratic ladder down to the *Muqadam* (village headman) all engaged themselves in the illegal practices which aimed at robbing the peasants of whatsoever little they would have in their possession. A scene from the folk play *Raza Pether* reveal that not to talk of cash or shali, which generally fell victim to the coretious eyes of the revenue officials, they did not even loose the sight of a petty domestic item like honey and kangri. Here is an extract from the folk play referred to above.

Sagwan, a character who represents the class of corrupt officials asks the potter, "Have you brought the fowl and the honey" "jenab", the potter (Kral) replies with trembling lips, "I have brought both the items", "You can see yourself', said the Potter. Finding honey in a little quantity, sagwan gives the potter harsh beating with the help of hard pointed stick. The entire body of the potter starts bleeding but the sagwan remains unmoved.[74]

In another folk play, *Buhery Pether* the shameful devises of patwari are exposed in a very touching manner. In one of the songs the picture of corrupt patwari is painted in the following adverse colour:

Patwēry yeli kod qalam te kakud, [75]
Athe chui dērith kethis jōo.

(When patwari opened his revenue record register,
He eagerly awaited for bribe from the party).

Though official corruption was rampant in all the ranks of Sikh administration, it reached to its climax during the Dogra period. In the second half of the 19th century the valley was divided into three districts, each headed by wazir-i-wazarat[76]. The districts in turn were divided into fifteen tehsils each headed by a tehsildar. Under the tehsildar there were one or two naib tehsildars. At the village level, there were the *Patwari, lambardar, mukdam, shaqdar* and *sozawul*. In addition to these officials, there were other officials like *Tehvildar, Harkara, Kardar, Kotval* and others.

The anti-ethical scheme of official corruption attained unimaginable dimension during the period under reference. Right from the top, every official was corrupt and defrauded the illiterate and the ignorant[77].

The patwari who was supposed to keep the basic revenue records of the village, began with keeping various versions of land record to book maximum possible graft from his client[78]. He would also join the lambardars in the falsification of revenue accounts of the cultivator against huge bribes. It is interesting to note that even *shaqdar*[79] whose function was only to watch the crops till the next collection by the government, black marketed the innocent cultivators with the threat of false accusation, that they had stolen the grain.

The Sazowul,[80] who supervised the work of shaqdar also extorted money the villagers. These unscrupulous officials for moment, forgot that they belonged to the soil to which the poor peasantry belong. They harassed their breathren to the extent of forcing them to desert their lands and occupy those for themselves under the 'Domodes Sword' of Begar. They were all guided by the community of interests. These interests cut across the communal considerations. Notwithstanding the fact, that whole chain of officials at the middle of the line were all Kashmiri Hindus. But the spineless numberdars, who were mostly Musalmans stabbed their co-religionists in their back by colluding with the tehsildar in falsification of their revenue accounts and the land grabs. Commenting on such sorry state of affairs A. Wingate remarks:

> *"The ignorant Muhammedan cultivator has not only no one he can call friend, but every one, whether Hindu or Muhammadan of any influence is against him"*[81].

The nineteenth century Kashmiri poet, Wahab Parrey Hajini gives a graphic picture of the official corruption prevalent among the different rungs of Dogra officialdom.

Sane Shethas tām zulma ōs garat behisāb[82]
Kamavith diyon harde hisei karobegarik azāb.
Sery sei very yes sāzāwul beyi Shaqdar, Kardār,
Ēsi Kheth cheth grīstis janas karān tim tār Tār.
Kardārs grīs tchadar esi chon issh o pidar,
Khā naqdi kha jinsi ikhtiyar tas sarbasr.

(upto the eighties of the nineteenth century,
the oppression and tyranny was at its height.
The hard produce of the cultivator was,
snatched forcibly and mercilessly from him.
All along the year, Sazowul and shaqdar,
fatened themselves at the hard labour of poor peasant.
The Kardar would not hesitate from taking the woolen blanket,
he enjoyed every power to fleece the cultivator).

The arrival of sazowul in the hamlet of Kashmiri peasant was so a matter of terrific nature that the latter would present the most invaluable house hold item before the farmer. This is also evidenced by the contemporary Kashmiri poet Maqbool Shah Kralwari in his famous peasant poem *Grees Nama*. He writes:

Sazōwul yud Yiyakh tas bronth neran [83]
Dinas dogh moth te peth kunjai sheran
Gendith guly roznes farman bardar
Pather was gari sutha behi masa mar
Tche chuy na kūr gobrā sōn ayut
Vechan ēsy rat esy bhat vati mayot
Salamey subhans vatān chi seri
Karan chis sery byon byon ejzuzēri
Nivān chis peskash vethy verhy kowakar pūty
Hevan vowadi peth tulith fakhran tihenz juty
Gewetch theni henzy chene kenh kath Netān keth
Guris bronh bronh pakan chis heth nakhan peth.
Ti nith chuk toti choban vethe ravan
Shalakh kerythey garad chuk veth rawan.

(On sazowal's visit in the village, all peasants
come forward to welcome him,
After removing his physical fatigue, he is placed
with honour at the elevated spot.
All, present there, remain standing with folded hands,
No body dare to sit down until he gets seated,
We reaffirm our commitment that our sons and
daughters are at our disposal,
We were eagerly waiting you O, pandit, yesterday.
In the next morning, all came one by one to pay him salute,
All present, turn by turn, show their helplessness.
Non fail to present fat hens before him,
They place with honour the shoes of Sazowul on their heads.
Not to talk of earthen pitchers full of ghee and butter,
They carry even more precious items on their
shoulders for the official,
Even after collecting all these items,
the peasants are repeatedly beaten, abused and frightened).

About Shaqdar, Kralwari writes:

Ditumna Shaqdars vuni kenhti lowah, [84]

Temis dardes kalas senis chu dawah.

[I (peasant) have yet to give the Shaqdar his share,
He has ligitimate authority even on our heads as well].

Among other agents of official oppression, there included Tehvildar, Kardar[85] and Zeldar. Wahab in a satirical tune portrays the pictures of these officials. He writes:

Āsi hai yus yeth alāqas ahli kārā kārdār [86]
Ōs bar taraj mardam tas be kuli ikhtiyar
Kharch temy sund teth alaqas bari gardān ōs qaraz
Waqte waqtei nakhe walun range rangei ōs faraz (Kardar)

Ōs Khalkan hisa tul tei lise, ale beyi, hakh hand [87]
Reta kēlis os tehvildar hekim andevand
Ōs veryyes kumanevith pushe āsan lōne veny
Kath, kowakar, Tchadar te dah vuh rushwei gev te theny.

(An official who acted a Kardar in a particular area,
it was obligatory on all to feed him with cash and kind.
His demands would never end,
All the times peasants remained indebted to him (Kardar).

The deceitful tricks adopted by the forest official to loot the poor masses have been beautifully versified by Ab. Ahad Azad, a revolutionary contemporary Kashmiri poet. He says:

Yiyam yeli rākhe fērister, [88]
Dimakh nei kenh anān ranger,
Getchem virizyon ti sarkēri,
Be no zera ashqe bemeri,
Hendis keri hūn, hūnis hond,
Kendis keri pōsh, pōshes kond.
Karun chum rēzy patwari,
Be no zare eshqe bemeri.

(Whenever the forest-guard and forester will come to me for bribe,
And if I fail to pay the hush money to them they will complain
to ranger against me.
Hence, even the fire wood of my domesticated
tree (willow) will be declared as state property,

How can I indulge into romance?
He will declare sheep as dog and dog as sheep,
People could not enjoy even the cheap vegetables,
without the permission of Tehvildar.
In the ploughing season,
His authority was unexcelled.
Even after toiling all the year in the field,
The cultivator was bound to pay blankets,
Sheep, fowl, butter, ghee and cash as a bribe to the official).

It was not only the work of revenue officials to rob the peasants of their labour but each member of the official machinery acted as an incubs to suck the life blood of the peasant folk. To quote Prem Nath Bazaz:

> *"Almost the whole brunt of official corruption had been borne by the Muslim masses. The police, the revenue department, the forest officials .... had their palms oiled by exaction of the unusual rasum."*[89]

On account of all prevailing corruption and communal bias, the institution of justice had also lost its meaning and purpose. The pervertive role of judiciary and police is summed up in these verses of Mehjoor, the national poet of Kashmir. He writes:

Teti ti chā mulzimas vaktuk yi insāf yar bēi heth karan khar,
Teti ti chā adālats lagne yiwan begunah tassendy rishtedar.
Teti ti chā zelim shikanjas manz barān mazlōme sund tarafdar,
Teti ti chā vakteky zirak te gately zelimas vanan dildār. [90]

(Whether there also the judicial system like ours robs the
plaintiff with all his near and dear ones?
There also, the near and distant relative
of petitioner are engaged in false litigation.
Whether there also the supporters of oppressed are
tortured in unwarranted ways?
Whether there also the witty and wise
call the tyrant their friends?).

Even in the chaotic conditions of natural calamities when peasants often found themselves in utter and abject poverty, the revenue officials never alienated

themselves from the precedental ways of exploitation and corruption[91]. They resorted to still harsher devices to reduce the unprivileged peasantry to the lowest degree of penury.

As already mentioned in the foregoing pages that the valley experienced recurring roll of natural calamities in the form of floods, famines, fires, earth quakes and epidemics, which besides causing great loss of life and property led people to dessert the lands and the looms[92]. Besides bringing into focus the disastrous effects of these natural calamities, the folk poems help in understanding the unique devices adopted by Dogra officialdom to unnerve the already fleeced peas antry.

In an extreme state of starvation, how the officials on land accompanied by military personnel brought terror to the friendless peasant is well depicted in these Kashmiri proverbs:

i. "Bata Bata te Pyāde pate"
ii. "Yed dag che Bed dag"
iii. "Ēses kūtha Tcheyo te ēhi pāthā drēyyō"
iv. "Hakēems te Hēkims nish najāt",
v. "Moqdams nei Pokhdan āsi gamas tuli Shamas tām". [93]

i. "Every food grain is being watched attentively a soldier"
ii. "The pain of greed outshines all physical pain"
iii. "Sweatning the tongue (to give something in bribe)
leads silencing the criticism."
iv. "An inhuman physician is nothing less than a cruel ruler"
v. "Accountability of Muqadam to higher up
Keeps him under control".

There can be no touching example of peasant discontent against the high handedness of revenue officials as is expressed symbolically in the following proverbs:

"i. Naman metch te kaman kitch?"
"ii. Halv galaan te dānis dadare kerith." [94]

(For whom we toil day and night?
i. Yes, of course, for the long roll of exploiters,
ii. "The grasshoopers will die but only after damaging the crops").

Not to talk of rice, which was the stapple food of Kashmiri and a major source of his sustanance, even the boiling water meant for the rice was also seized from the peasant family if they failed to grease the palm of a revenue official like *Sazowul*. This is mirrored precisely in this Kashmiri folk song:

Kus bā chuk Sazōwul? [95]
Kya chuk Tchāran?
Enymei Dull
Su Kemy nuey?
Tcḥe te beyi Kemy
Me kar chow
Tchei chuk Tsoōr
Kute wal lāyi lūr.

(Who are you there at the door? O, Sazowul!
What do you search for?
The boiling water of rice.
Who had stolen that?
You, the peasant, "Said Sazowul,
How you came to know that I have drunk it?
You are thief.
Kutawal (Police officer) will put you to task.
You will divulge everything before him).

In yet another folk song, it is indicated that the peasant was not even allowed to use water before filling[96] the pockets of the Mirab (incharge of cannal). The lines of one of the folk song give a pen picture of this situation:

Mulki kashmiras kam bidat geyi [97]
Hes keriv lūts vetith peyi.
Zelimav ābas rete hei sai,
Rahim Bhatan yām mutcher srāna kuthis bar.

Krekh lēyis forestern gusal masā kar,
Ya roz be taharat nata bar dya.

(What a misfortune has befallen on Kashmiris!
Be aware, officials have come to loot the peasants of their produce.
Even the water which is in abundance in Kashmir gets
released only after bribing the incharge of the cannel,
The moment Rahim Bhat opened the door of a village bathroom,
He was cautioned by the forester not to go for ablutions
before giving him a tip.)

Begar (Forced Labour)

Another brutal exercise which often in the past sent shivers in the spines of Kashmiri peasantry was the infamous institution of Begar. Though the evidences suggest that the institution had been in operation from the early Hindu times, but it reached to the obnoxious heights during the Sikh and the Dogra rule[98]. The Kashmir valley, surrounded by high mountains and in the absence of any other transport, necessitated the employment of large number of men for carrying essential commodities into or out of the valley. During any large scale military venture huge armies of porters were requisitioned from the country side. As Kashmir fell into the hands of unscrupulous conquerors and tyrants, payment to the porters was not made and the custom of forced labour or Begar developed consequently[99].

During the Sikh rule even an ordinary soldier could command a native to do any work for him. The expansionist policy of Sikhs in the mountainous region of north Kashmir accelerated the moment of Sikh soldiery in the hazardous areas. This led to the frequent call of Begar for the cultivators to help in carrying the provisions and the necessary luggage across the inhospitable mountain summits. During the governorship of Sheikh Mohi-ud-din (1845) ten thousand cultivators have been

reported as collected for carrying arms, ammunitions and food supplies to Baltistan[100]. It is said that many of them lost their lives in the hazardous mountain paths and the some survived, returned to their homes after months.

But the system assumed extremely dreadful proportion in Kashmir valley during the early Dogras mainly because of the frontier wars for conquest and the consequent necessity of providing the troops on the move as well as the huge military establishments in the conquered territories with adequate supplies[101]. It was only a miracle if some one survived the most demanding journeys, the frost bites, the severity of winter, the meagre and sometimes an unfamiliar diet[102]. According to the accounts of the European Travellers, who had a chance to visit Kashmir during the period under reference, "if some porter slipped down the precipice or fell ill or had his feet frost bitten; he was heartlessly abandoned to die by inches, totally unattended in his anguish and a prey to vultures and beasts while the caravan moved on, shamelessly unmindful of his tragic impending doom[103].

In case, some disturbance was noticed on the northern frontiers either due to the result of Russian presence in Afghanistan or by the revolt of some disfactory frontier chiefs, the quantum of army movement would increase in dimension of Begar. For instance, in 1853, 1866, 1880, large army movements were made and thousands of Begar collies were pressed into service as the human carriage of loads[104].

What made it a forced labour was that it was taken when the cultivators used to be busy with their farming operations. Loads could not be taken to Gilgit during winter months for the road to gilgat would get blocked due to heavy snow fall. Since

the summer and the autumn used to be very busy seasons for the cultivator, naturally he would be unwilling to be withdrawn from his fields and taken to desolate mountain road when he was not guaranteed safe conduct. No wages were paid for such a hazardous job[105] only in case the requisition of Begar would be made for a foreign visitor, a labour would receive annas 14 per stage of carrying the loads[106]. For an ordinary begaree only a ser of rice a day and some straw sandals for making pulhors[106(b)] (grass shoes) was given to them.

The worst part of the institution was that it was levied disproportionately from the various sections of the population. It was also conducted discriminately. The lands of the chakdars, jagirdars, specially assigned villages, as such, villages as were clandestinely occupied by the officials or the influential people were all exempted from Begar[107]. The most horrible dimension of the scheme was that most of the villagers in order to get exemption from Begar would readily agree to work as bonded labour in the house or the field of the privileged people referred to above. These people of inhuman character and nature, taking advantage of their utter helplessness, often sicked the very blood of their views by making them to toil day and might without any recess or the break[108]. Such was the magnitude of terror of Gilgit or Bunji (a stage on the way to Gilgit) that the parents even today to frighten their naughty children tell them that they will be packed to Bavanji. Kashmiri phrases *Bavanji Baron* or *Bavanj Sozen* are enough to recall the inquitious Begar days during the period under review.

In addition to this, the city people[109] were also exempted from the cruel exercise of 'Begar'. The favourites and the vested class like *Pirzadas, Pandits, Sikhs,*

Rajputs and *Gujjars* were also left outside the ambit of Begar[110]. In case any body hesitated or resented he was dealt with severe punishment. This is also evidenced by the contemporary poet Wahab Hajini. He writes:

Kār begāruk venei Kya ōs āsān Shorushar [111],
Grūs palana ledith very yes petham ōs berkhar.
Gethihai yas gēr hēzir ōs tas amali hisāb,
Chōb Tei beizati Jurmane deshnām-o-āzab.

(How can I tell you the intensity of terror
caused by inhuman act of begar,
The cultivator was tied illegitimately in the bond
to act as a beast carrier.
Whosoever was found absent, he was to undergo
the severest act of torture, And victimization, like beating,
fine and some times evev death would to be hisreward.)

The poetic narrative is further endorsed by the details recorded by Dr. Artheer Neve. He states:

"I was at Islamabad, endeavouring to fight an epidemic of cholera..... and noticed collies collecting from all the surrounding region, each with his blanket, grass shoes, his carrying crotch back. And I was present at the great concourse on green meadow in front of the mosque when a sort of farewell service was held for those starting on this perilous journey. Loud was the sobbing of many and frigid the demeanour of all as, led by mullah, they intoned their prayers and chanted some of their special Ramazan penilential problems. Even braver men than the Kashmiris might well have been agitated at such a time, when taking farewell of their loved ones! Who will till their fields? what would happen during their long absence to their wives and children? To what perils would they themselves be exposed in the crowded bivoucs and snowy passes of the deadly Gilgit district"[112].

The pain and the anguish of Kashmiri women caused by the long absence of their male members sent as begarees can well be discerned from these lines of Kashmiri folk song. A forgotten lady expresses her deep sigh in long absence of her husband had been seized for begar.

Getchi Kuthi Temy Sund brōnth geyōmei, [113]

Teti vutchmas mey Tehāyan,
Be hei bāl lares vuni nei āmei,
Nāmei sozas Tūry.
Vany hei dimhas shehr te gāmei,
Be hei bāl lāres tūry.

(Sobbing lonely in a desserted room!
I expected his early safe arrival
But it was only a sweet memory,
I shall run to the mountain heights to welcome his return,
But, nothing is known of his whereabouts!
How misrable it is!
Let some body come forward to carry his message for me,
I will search for him in and around the city,
in distant towns and meadows.
I shall go to see him at the high snowy mountain peaks).

Mr. E. F. Knight, who had the opportunity of witnessing the peasant collection for 'Begar' and chanced to accompany one batch to Gilgit and beyond, where he went to cover for London times, military operations against Honza, chitral etc. has recorded. To quote him:

> *"But a native of this state (Jammu and Kashmir) suffers from a form of oppression for more severe than the extortion of the tax collectors, the latter at least leaves him a bare subsistence, but that of which I am now speaking signifies separation from family, and in too many cases torture and death Kashmiri authorities have been utterly careless of the comfort, and even of the lives, of the unfortunate wretches who are dragged from their homes and families to trudge for months over the wearisome marches of that arid country. They fell on the road to perish at time by the cold on the snowy passes. When a man is seized for this form of Begar, his wives and children hang upon him, weeping, taking it almost for granted that they will never see him again. A gang of these poor creatures, heavily laden with grain, toiling along the desert crags between Astore and Gilgit, on a burning summer's day, urged on a sepoy guard, is perhaps as pitiable a spectacle as any to be seen on the roads of Siberia. But these are not the convicts and criminals; they are Mussulman farmers, harmless subjects of the Maharaja".*[114]

The echo of an unimaginable pain experienced by a Kashmiri villager on his way to rough and rugged ridges has been dramatically summarised by Kashmiri

Bhand in *Angrez Pether*[115]. A begaree while approaching the frozen and chilly mountain passes has been shown half naked, eating only a handful of maize corn on short intervals. The trembling curved limbs of a begaree as projected in the play, gives a touching picture of begarees misery, pain and his half starved state of grim life[115(b)]. The term "Gilgit" had become the archetype of terror for every Kashmiri which is substantiated by the remarks of W. Lawrence as well. To quote him:

> *"Gilgit to Kashmiri is a constant terror, when it was rumoured that transport was wanted to convey the baggage of the troops going to or coming from Gilgit, there was a general stampede among the villagers. I have seen whole villages bivouccking on the mountains when the agents for the collection of a transport arrived in Tehsil, and I have seen inhuman punishment dealt out to men who demurred to leaving their homes for two or three months with the prospect of dealth from cold or starvation. I have seen villagers manned from frost bite or shrivelled and paralysed from exposure to cold, and it is no marvel that the Kashmiris should loathe the very name of Gilgit. It may be added that if men would pay four annas in order to avoid carrying a load for one easy stage, they would very gladly pay much larger sums to escape a journey to Gilgit, and I know that since I have been in Kashmir, villagers have paid from Rs.70.00 to Rs.90.00 per head in order to purchase their exemption".*[116]

It may be mentioned here that Begar was not only taken for carrying loads to Gilgit or work as porters for foreign travellers, but under its comprehensive name every kind of demand for labour or property was taken unpaid[117]. Top revenue officials would get their lands cultivated or even houses built in the city without any wages. During Pratap Singh's rule, when there started series of public development works to give boost to the agricultural activities, peasants were pressed into service to dig canals forcibly without any wages[118]. In the following folk song, it is indicated that not only men folk was taken for forced labour but the women were not also spared from being taken as begarees. Here are some verses of the song:

Gari pate gari mongehek akh akh,
Mard nei āsi zeny yī be shak.
Rale mile ēsi shat tchatē nī,
Kowl khene neky bōz afsānei.
Kūt jābir pyōs lassa pandit,
Niyōn Moma Dar gase rez gendith.
Dara bhayi chas pata doranei.

Shor shar voth endy pekhy gaman,
Voth talvās khāsan āman,
Zani asekh khūn hāreīni.
Bār khodaya kery tav yēri,
Legy begari tawnas sēri,
Geyi barbād kam jananei. [119]

(One each collie was sought from every family in the village,
If male member was not available, let the female present herself for the job.
How brutally Lassa Pandit behaved![120]
He dragged Muma Dar tied with a grass rope.
The women folk of Dar family hurriedly followed him,
There was great hue and cry all over the village.
Every one in the village was terrified,
Women folk of the conserned begarees were weeping loudly.
Oh, Great God! Come to our rescue take pity on our lot,
we have been dragged for unpaid labour).

Finding themselves in a state of utter helplessness, Kashmiri Muslims often sought refuge in the calmly environs of Rishi or Sufi Shrines to invoke the help of the saintly souls for the rindadance of the official oppression and torture. This is also mirrored in these lines of Kashmiri folk song.

Haī mōji kur lejiye sabras
Bōr shānan lodhei khezras
kone dasgīr sēb yiman hai gālān

Haī mōji beni lejiye sabras
Bōr shanan lod hei Qādes
Kōne Sheikh sēb yiman hei gālan [121]

(Oh, my mother, I appreciate your patience,

See how your son Khazar has been heavily loaded
Why don't Dastagir Sehab kill these oppressors?

Oh, my mother, your sister appreciates your patience
See how your son Qadir has been heavily loaded
Why don't Sheikh Sehab kill these oppressors?

Labour Discontent

In comparison to rural population, people in urban Srinagar enjoyed a slice of official relief and attention[122]. But the common folk who generally worked as skilled workers in the craft centres owned by wealthy Karakhandars faced multiple of problems which did not allow them to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

No doubt, agriculture was the major source of income to the state and was the major source of the public sustenance, but at the same time there existed other non-agricultural pursuits which broght good amount of income to the state. The most significant non-agricultural occupation adopted by the people was handicrafts[123] (dastakari).

According to the sources available, among the different dastkaris, Shawl industry formed the major source of income to the state after the land revenue.

Long before the advent of Sikh rule in Kashmir, the shawls of Kashmir had found markets in different parts of the world[124]. Sikhs who had an exemplary greed for money, the demand of Kashmiri shawl in the European markets especially in France, Germany and Great Britain allured their covetous eyes[125]. In order to amass more and more wealth from this rich trade, they brought this industry under the ambit of exorbitant tax net. In addition to enormous tax imposition, the shawl baufs were made subject to incalculable restrictions[126]. In order to snatch away from them their

last penny, they were forced to purchase the exorbitantly priced paddy of the state. The shawl bauf was so much oppressed by the state that instead of developing interest in his work, which the promising returns would have otherwise induced him to do, he lost interest in the work and whosoever managed fleeing away from the valley, he made no bones in doing it[127]. If there was no mass exodus, it was because they were like the peasants, tied to their work, and no one could leave the country without proper permission, which was hardly given to them because the government rightly feared that in view of the relieved conditions outside, they would never return and thereby a very important revenue sector would be thrown into shambles[128]. The government resorted to every kind of oppressive device to restrict the free mobility of shawl workers. The Sikh government which aimed at draining all the wealth out of the state boundaries, forbade the open sale of Kashmiri shawl in the market. No finished shawl of whatever quality could be sold until it bore the seal of the Dagh Shawl Department. According to Young Husband every shawl was taxed 26 percent upon the estimated value, besides which there was an important duty on the wool with which they were manufactured[129].

These coercive measures were enough to skin the bonny skeletons of poor Kashmiri shawl baufs. The heavy taxes imposed on Kashmiri shawl weavers has been artistically portrayed by Wahab Hajini in verse:

> Shāwl bāufs sheyitreh rowapeyi bod eyinisāl,
> Ōs teth wakts juda hukma mahali Dāgh shāwl. [130]
>
> (A Shawl weaver was supposed to pay thirty six rupees annual
> as a tax to the government;
> In addition to this, he was to pay the dag shawl tax).

The most detestable piece of oppression committed against the shawl baufs was however, this that none of them were permitted to relinquish their employment without finding of substitute which, of course, it was almost always impossible to do. Shonberg remarking about the taxation of factory owners and weavers of shawls says:

> *"I have no hesitation in saying that the shawls sold for some hundreds do not cost the seller more than a few rupees worth of a singara".*[131]

A latter source mention that "the condition of shawl weavers had been so critical that to avoid being compelled to pursue the profession many of them cut off their fingers and some even blinded themselves to escape their miserable condition[132].

During the early period of the Dogra rule, Kashmiris particularly shawl baufs starved and no attempt was made on the part of the Dogra government to give relief to the starved shawl weavers. The frequent occurrence of floods, famines and epidemics further aggravated the situation and the people had to run towards Punjab[133]. Robbed both by the natural forces and the imperial Dogra interests, Kashmiri shawl baufs, the manufacturers of globally reputed shawls sunk deep into the bottomless oceans of disapair and poverty. No parent was ready to give his daughter in marriage to the *Khandavav* – the shawl weaver. The pitiable lot of the weaver is well depicted in this Kashmiri proverb:

> "Siny muhimi tsochal[134]
> Reny muhimi Khandavav"
>
> (In the scarcity of vegetables, one could easily find mellow;
> In case of the scarcity of men, one can easily get the shawl
> baufs as a husband for ones daughter).

The final blow to the industry came in the wake of Franco-Prussian war of 1870. With the defeat of France in the war, Kashmir lost the major export market of

the shawl trade. While the demand of Kashmiri goods in European markets suffered heavily, it threw lot of people out of employment in the valley[135]. Inspite of being the back bone of Kashmirs economy, the shawl weaver was the worst hit of the Dogra oppression. The miserable plight of the shawl weavers can well be gleaned from these Kashmiri folk verses:

Kam ākh to chawakh gigras tchēlim,
vutch sethni trusev kam khoja khēlim,
Doh kar phol, kar aftāb dolum,
Dagh senetch, reh shikmetch tchejim,
Hendi hak to kremi sēthy shury pēlim
Gah rētchan faqei guly sevim .[136]

[I (shawl weaver) can not express the magnitude of my pain and sorrow,
My needle helped in earning enormous wealth for the wealthy karkhanadars.
When the day dawned and the sun set, I did not know,
I patiently bore the strikes of starvation, hunger and sickness.
I brought up my children by feeding them with stray vegetables,
Some times, I lulled them to sleep even without food).

No wonder, therefore, the shawl baufs were the first section of the Kashmiri society who protested against the government in 1865[137]. The cumulative result of all those factors was that a large number of Kashmiri shawl weavers left the valley and settled in different towns of Punjab. It was infact, this section of Kashmiri society which played vital role in acquainting people outside Kashmir about the sad plight of the oppressed Kashmiris. The moral support which the Kashmiri freedom fighters received from Punjabi Muslims in the beginning of the 20th century was more due to the efforts of these Kashmiri shawl weavers who had left the valley in the last quarter of the nineteenth century[138]. Those who continued with very meagre wages as a natural corollary of demand-supply relationship, government took no step to relieve their pain and anguish. To quote P. N. Bazaz:

"The government of Kashmir tell us that the Franco – German war of 1870 gave a fatal blow to the shawl trade in the west from which it could not revive. But this is not defence when we know that such blows had been dealt upon the industry prior to 1870. If the market in the west lost temporarily, a government could create new market elsewhere. But this could be achieved only if the government were sympathetic and wide awake".[139]

Sheikh Muhanmmad Abdullah offers a tourching narrative of a starved shawl bauf who died of debt and starvation due to the decline of shawl trade in Kashmir. He states:

"A boy living in my neighborhood, Abdul Ahad by name worked in an embroidery centre installed in our house. He was attractive, good looking and also highly cultured inspite of his poverty. He remained away from the centre perhaps on account of illness as reported, but soon after he was declared dead. I went to his home to console his parents. It was given out that his homestead had been running in debt of a usurer, who had continuously been asking for clearing the debt. It is also reported that he insulted them in the bargain. My sensitive friend could not withstand this all. Hence, he attempted to save money to clear the debt on the pain of starvation. He somehow managed to feed his two younger sisters but himself remained feeding on craft. This broke down his health and resulted in his consumption to death".[140]

The famous philosopher poet, Dr. S. m. Iqbal was also touched by the pitiable condition of Kashmiri shawl weavers and versified their lot as under:

Sarma ki havavon mei uriyan hai badan is ka,
Deta hāi hunar jiska amiron ko doshala.

(It is the Kashmiri artisan who provides soft and delicate du-shawls to the rich. But alas! he (the poor artisan) himself remains naked even in the chilly winds of winter).

The Dag-shawl department which was established to regulate the shawl trade was exclusively dominated by Kashmiri Pandits. In sharp contrast to the starved state of Muslim shawl weavers, the Hindu managers of the department lived in the highest styles of luxury and material comfort. The following reference given by Lawrence shall help in bringing out the marked contrast between the Pandit officials and the

Muslim shawl weavers:

> *"The houses (in Srinagar) vary in size from the large and capacious burnt brick palaces of the Pandit aristocrat and his 500 retainers, warmed in the winter by hamams to the dull house of three stories and their rooms of wood and sundried bricks, where the poor shawl weaver lives his squalid cramped life and shiver in the frosty weather".*[141]

The condition of a shawl weaver as portrayed by Madusudan Gunju is still more heart piercing than Lawrence. He writes:

> *"the standard of living of the workers engaged in the woolen industry as a whole is very low. Their food is poor, clothing altered, and the houses in the most dilapidated condition. They can not afford to drink milk and eat mutton even once a week. Their staple food in Kashmir province is rice which they eat with an ordinary kind of cooked vegetable leaves called hak. Some of them can not afford even that much1".*[142]

The discontentment of a big and vocal class of shawl weavers, majority of whom were city dwellers found its expression in the first labour agitation of 1865[143]. It was a standard of revolt against the extreme kind of exploitation. Though the agitation was suppressed with iron hand,[144] but it provided a fertile ground to those few sensitive souls who realised that for inaugurating a new and just era there was no other alternative but to launch a sustained struggle against the Dogra Raj.

European Missionary And Socio-Political Awakening

With the coming of the Europeans in the second half of the 19th. century, the wrongs done by Dogra imperialism in Kashmir began to be exposed to the outer world.[145] This resulted in the indirect intervention of British Indian administration into the affairs of Kashmir. In order to save its honour, Dogra rulers set in motion number of administrative reforms particularly in the field of revenue administration[146]. The services of some European experts were also sought to give boost to otherwise

abandoned agriculture. The occupancy rights recognised by the new agrarian settlement though created a sense of belonging among the cultivators, but the fundamental question regarding land ownership was left unattended[147]. In addition to this the granting of Assami rights to chakdars had given further impetus to absentee land lordism which assumed diabolic proportion with the every passing day. This made the peasantry restive once more. The favourites of the Dogra Raj, who had been in the habit of enjoying number of privileges at the cost of oppressed peasantry; did not allow the disgruntled section of the society to raise their voice against the Dogra oppression[148]. They, instead, used every apparatus to silence the genuine grievances of the distressed people.

The crafty attempts of the favourites of the Raj however, did not work on the disillusioned urban labour who inspite of every official restriction expressed their resentment in public.

The establishment of English Residency in Srinagar and with the coronation of Sri Pratap Singh (1885-1925) as a new Dogra Maharaja, Kashmir began to experience new currents of modern influence.[149] Kashmir, though geographically an isolated territory could not escape getting influenced by what was happening in British India and all other parts of the world. In the first quarter of the present century, Banihal Cart Road from Srinagar to Jammu had been completed. In 1915, the railway link from Sialkot to Jammu was established. The Jehlum Valley Road had already been completed as back as 1890 and it connected Kashmir with Rawalpendi Rail head. With the availability of means of communication and transport facilities, it was possible for the new ideas to influence the people of Kashmir. The freedom struggle in

British India which by this time had entered into a very critical period, was bound to influence the young Kashmir Muslims, who by that time had enrolled themselves as regular students in Punjab and other Universities of British India.

Thus we observe the simmerings of this temper in Kashmir in the shape of silk factory workers strike as early as 1917 and 1920 for increasing their wages[150]. Emboldened by these strikes silk factory workers gave a major strike call in 1924 against the inefficiency of wages, corruption of officials and the tyrannies of the inspecting staff. The agitation sent shivers in the spines of Dogra government and the Dogra police resorted to indiscriminate firing which resulted in the death of many defenceless silk factory workers[151].

The Kashmiri Pandits who were the first to enjoy the benefits of modern education and their close proximity with the ruling Hindu dynasty conferred upon them many privileges which the Muslims could not even dream due to their educational backwardness and the prejudicial approach of the Dogra government against the common Kashmiri Muslims. The Kashmiri Pandits who held important administrative positions did little to appease their Muslim brethren, instead, they behaved in such a bureaucratic style which created great distrust[152] among the Kashmiri Muslims who constituted eighty percent of the total population. They were treated more unfairly in every sphere of life than the Kashmiri Hindus. The horrible dimension of the situation was that Muslims could not even effect marriages[153] as they were to pay marriage tax on every marriage. This is also evidenced by this Kashmiri verse of contemporary poet:

Tath zamānas manz musalmān keriha yus yeniwōl,
Sery sei veryyes pereshān ōs āsān gobre mōl.
Quest questei ōs hōrān zēlimas kun cheti dyār,
Os der shēdi muqarar her akis tefsilwar.[154]

(During that time if any Muslim wished to effect marriage,
The parents of the bridegroom would be seen in great tension all along the year.
He would pay off the debts in recurring installments to the profiteer.
There was a marriage tax, without paying that, no marriage could be conducted).

Still worse was be ban on cow slaughter which continued to be punished with harsh tortures and in some cases with brazen death[155].

Moved by the sad plight of Kashmiris and the unimaginative mind of the last Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh (1925-1947) and his advisors, Sir Albin Benerji who was foreign and political minister of the state, resigned under protest from his post. His observations regarding the political, social and economic conditions prevailing in the state made in a press interview, created an uproar in the country and produced deep effect in the minds of the people of the state. He said:

"Jammu and Kashmir is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Muhammadan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present little or no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances. There is hardly any public opinion in the state. As regards the press it is practically non existent with the result that the government is not benefited to the extent that it should be by the impact of healthy criticism".[156]

Insighting into the crumbling state of Muslim poverty, P.N.Bazaz reveals, "The poverty of the Muslim was appalling. Dressed in rags which could hardly hide his body and barefooted, a Muslim peasant presented the appearance rather of a

starving beggar than one who filled the coffers of the state. He worked laboriously in the fields during the six months of the summer to pay the state its revenues and taxes, the officials their 'rasum' and the money lender his interest. Most of them were the landless labourers working as serfs of the absentee landlords. They hardly earned, as their share of the produce, enough for more than three months. For the rest they had to earn by other means. During the six months they were unemployed and had to go outside the boundaries of the state to work as labourers in big towns and cities of British India. Their lot, as such, was no good, and many of them died every year, unknown, unwept and unsung outside their homes. The disgraceful environments and unkind surroundings in which so many of them died was a slur alike on the people and the government of the country to which they belonged"[157].

It was at this critical juncture of our history that there emerged a young boy Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah[158], on the political horizon of Kashmir. It was under his dynamic leadership that the struggle for Kashmiris freedom gained momentum and direction and the down trodden people who were earlier dubbed as "Zulum parast" came forward with redoubled courage and conviction to fight against the autocratic rule of the last Dogra Maharaja Hari Singh[159].

With the Muslim masses groaning under several disabilities and passing through a period of severe economic depression; the administration under an inefficient and unsympathetic bureaucracy, and with the direct encouragement by the British to agitators the stage was set for a convulsion early in 1931.[160]

Historically and politically the 13th July, 1931[161] is the most important day in the annals of Kashmir History. From this day the struggle for independence and freedom started in a very organised manner. It was of course, the struggle of a victimized and subjugated people particularly Kashmiri Muslims against the oppressive autocratic Dogra rule of Jammu Dogras.

Unnerved by the recent political developments, Hari Singh (1925-1947), the last Dogra Maharaja appointed a commission to go into the grievances of the people and on 12th November he announced the appointment of the commission under the chairmanship of Sir B. J. Glancy[162] of the foreign and political Department of the Government of India.

The report of the commission was published in April, 1932. It was a document of great historical importance as it acknowledged in a true historical perspective the ugliest discrimination of the state towards the majority of its ruled people. Besides other things, the commission recommended that all the religious buildings of the Muslims in possession of the Government should be restored to them. The commission also recommended that measures should be adopted for the educational development of the Muslims. Regarding the ownership rights of land, the commission recommended that "proprietary rights should be granted in all respects to all lands of which the ownership is retained by the state and right of occupancy is enjoyed by the private persons.

As regards begar, which was still practised by officials, the commission recommended that due payment should be made for any labour sought for the state purpose[163].

The chained Kashmiris attributed this great success to the dynamic leadership of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. This is endorsed by the following Kashmiri verse, which the people sang when the recommendations were made public:

Glancy commission bronh kun pakān gō,
Yuhei rang anān gō miya Sheri Kashmir.

(The recommendations made by Glancy commission owe its
origin to the towering personality and leadership of
Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah [Whom people address as Sheri-Kashmir]
the lion of Kashmir).

A couplet from one of the folk songs sung in praise of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, who emerged as the leaders of the downtrodden Kashmirs, reads:

Asi getchi asun Shahi Sultān,
Be gownah mare geyi esy musalmān.
Adi Ledikh qilas edy Jaikhān,
Asi gekhi asun Panun Sultān.

We are oppressed,[164]
We want our Shah Sultan,
Our own glorious Sultan.
We, the innocent Muslims,
are doomed some are locked in the fort,
some are behind bars.

In the person of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, the Sullen and sick Kashmiris found a man with iron will and courage, who possessed every merit to voice the peoples grievances without caring for the fatal results[165]. Naturally by exhibiting his outstanding courage and boldness, he enslaved the hearts of victimized Kashmiri Muslims and in a very short period he not only became the hero of political struggle

but also emerged as a legendary hero in the folk literature of Kashmir. People composed dozens of folk songs in hanour and admiration of his courage, valour and other leadership qualities. Here we give some of the folk verses composed about him by Kashmiri women.

Soureke bohoduro Karyo guru Guro
I Tche chuko son reh bero, karyo guru guro [166]
II Soureke baskine Shehreki nuro
Keryo bahoduro Tchey fida pan [167]
III Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah
Shine Khote Proneye, Deenechi rikhi peth nonye drav [168]
IV. Pane vetheran kya chu Likhith,
Sheri Kashmir zinda bad [169]
V Zene giri Aab drav,
Soure manze lal drav [170].

I The hero of soura,
I adore you,
you are our leader,
The hero of soura.
II You, the resident of Soura, the light of city
Let us sacrifice ourselves for your bravery and boldness.
III Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's
personality is as clean as snow,
He came into prominence by voicing the Muslim grievances.
IV It is a matter of great Joy,
that the leaves of the trees
bear the name of Sher-i-Kashmir.
V Soura threw up the jewel,
And Zainagir (canal) got the water.

In tune with the new spirit of political awakening which was increasingly gaining ground in Kashmir, there appeared a new force on the cultural front, who ignited the zeal and fervour of Kashmiri freedom fighters through their poetic compositions. Mehjoor,[170(b)] the national poet of Kashmir and Abdul Ahad Azad,[171] the poet of humanism, composed number of revolutionary poems which became the

great source of inspiration for the lovers of freedom struggle. Mehjoor called on Muslims in a sentimental manner to drink once more the old wine they had drunk in their great days.

Bata ai Muslim Kashmir Kabhi Socha bi hei Tune, [172]
Tu hei kis Gulshani rangen Ka Shakhi Gryani.
Tere aslaf woh thei Jinke ilmu - fazl Ueagey,
Adab se Jukte Thei danishveraney hindu Irani.

(O, Muslims of Kashmir! Have you ever reflected
upon the grand culture to which you belonged.
Before the wisdom and intellect of your ancestors,
Wisemen of Persia and India bowed their heads).

The poet does not seem to be approving a change that is brought about by slow tactics and in haphazard manner. Instead a strong spirit, not a stop gape arrangement, is considered the determinant factor in fostering a true revolution. He writes:

Agar vezenahan basti gulan hund trav zirobam, [173]
Bunil Kar, vav kar, gagrei kar tufan paidakar.

(If habitat of flowers is to be awakened, give up hesitant measures,
Let thunder rumble, let there to be an earthquake, let the storms uproot
the every relic of old order).

According to F. M. Hussanaian, "The flames of growing nationalism were to a great extent fanned by his (Mehjoor's) poetry and his poems became the national anthems for the national movement in Kashmir[174]. His poem *"Valo ha Bagwano"* infused new vigour and dynamism in the hearts of Kashmiri lovers. Such was the appeal of the song that it cut the boundaries of individual craftsmanship and became the part and parcel of Kashmiri folk literature. Here we quote some of the lines of the song:

Walō hā bogwanō nav baharuk shān paīda kar [175]
Phalan gul, gat karan bui bul tithi sāmān pāidā kar.

(Come gardner, create the glory of spring,

Make guls bloom and bulbuls sing create such haunts).

The reflection of the new awakening is also admirably mirrored by other Kashmiri poets of the period and Mehjoor was happily joined by a number of younger contemporaries like Azad, Arif, Fani and Aasi.[176]

Infact the five years (from 1942-1946) were the most significant years of the development of New Kashmir verse. The socialistic out look on life that characterised much of the writing of these years was not the forced result of indoctrination but the natural outcome of a congenial response to a new intellectual development in the country infiltrating into Kashmir mostly through urdu poetry, particularly of Iqbal.[177] Azad's "Shikwa-a-Iblees" clearly indicate this influence, yet his humanism, his immense faith in man cutting across all distinctions of caste, community and creed, refused to be circumscribed by any sort of religious fanaticism or communal prejudice; and his whole poetry is, infact, a mighty crusade not only against the social evils but also against all types of national fads.[178] No wonder, therefore, that the denunciation of anti-social elements almost became an obsession with him. He had realised:

"The temples, mosques and such other institutions[179]
indulge in empty drum-beatings;
Their hearts are utterly devoid of love".

Infact, it was a sort of his poetic manifesto:

"To become free, to end tyranny,[180]
and to liquidate superstition,
This is my cherished dream,
This may ambition and this may clarion-call".

By highlighting the age old exploiting devices of the alien rulers and their local collaborators, Kashmiri poets discharged their national role in a most befitting

manner. Infact, it was the enthusiasm created by their poetic creations that helped political leadership to experience a new political environ which followed the partition of Hindustan into two dominions – India and Pakistan in the year 1947[181].

From the content referred to in the forgoing pages, we can humbly draw a conclusion that unlike other parts of the sub-continent, Kashmir did not experience even a single organised peasant revolt amidst appalling heights of peasant oppression and victimization. But the fact of the matter remains that Kashmiris (both peasantry and urban labour) expressed their resentment against the oppressive devices of the non-Kashmiri rulers and for this purpose they developed a mechanism which was in tune with the contemporary political environ. An attentive study of different genres of Kashmiri folk literature tend us to suggest that oppressed peasantry did not remain as silent spectators against the unjust policies of the alien rulers, infact, their reaction and response was more guided by God centered beliefs rather than the law centered concepts. Contrary to the opinion which dubbed Kashmiris as Zulum parast (blind worshipers of cruelty) it is observed that they attempted all possible means to fight their oppressors, instead of meekly surrendering before them. Finding themselves as surrounded by unfavourable circumstances, they adopted a scheme of collective behaviour which involved lesser risk for striking against the oppressive system. They opted for the desertion of cultivable land of the enemy rather than to be annihilated[182] by him. The exercise inwardly aimed at striking at the very roots of the position and power of his enemy to whom the revenue from the lands constituted the major source of strength[183] and power. While, one the one hand, desertion of land was the only safeguard to survive the wanton annihilatory policy of the ruthless superior right

holders, it at the same time was aimed at bringing the economic downfall of the state, as the agriculture was the mainstay of economy and there was a big gap between the land-man ratio[184]. This deserting of land was the common form of peasant protest against oppression. Kashmiri expressions "Tul Palve Te Voth Tchelav" (Take your clothes and let us run away) and "Pushuk Ti Nei Tcholukh Ti Na" (If you cannot overcome the enemy, why didn't you run away) are enough to endorse our assertion and argument.

Besides deserting the land, the peasantry also resorted to a unique style of protest by which they avenged their oppression by joining hands with the enemies of their oppression or acted as mute spectators of their downfall. Thus a common saying in Kashmir:

"Akis dezān dēr te baiyakh washenāvān athei"

(A man's beard is burning, and another is warming his hands upon it).

Abondoning the land amid ploughing season was also yet another form of peasant resentment. The refusal of the peasants to cultivate the lands forced the revenue officers to be present in the villages at the commencement of sowing of a crop. The constant presence and vigil of the police[185] or armed forces in the fields is borne out by this Kashmiri proverb:

"Bata Bata Te Pyade Pate" [186]

(Every handful of grain was strictly being watched by the armed soldiery).

The assertion is further substantiated by Walter Lawrence:

"The Tehsildar rarely moved out, except at the time of ploughing for the autumn crops, when it was necessary to urge the villagers to cultivate".[187]

The indepth study of *Bhande Pethers* (Folk songs) also suggest that peasants might have exhibited their resentment and silent protests against the official tyranny and oppression. That is why we often find satirical expressions and agitating dramatic situations which indirectly aimed at ridiculing the different cadres of revenue administration. The Muqadam, the Patwari, the Shaqdar, the Sazowul, the Domb, the Tehsildar and other officials associated with revenue administration are often made the subject of peasant sarcasm and indignation. Under such system of cruel governance, it would have been impossible to arrange an organised protest which involved punishment no less than death.

The political atmosphere that had not only snatched the power of expression but crushed the very soul of Kashmiris can well be imagined from the following extract stated by G. M. Sadiq:

> *"We Kashmiris have forgotten the word as well as meaning of the word freedom due to our long span of four hundred years of slavery. Our many generations have been bred and brought up in slavery with the result that we prefer to remain slaves and think that slavery is our birth right. Just as when anyone continues to wear rags or a mad main chains, he thinks such chains to be ornaments. In the same way, the Kashmiris were content with slavery but the wind of the times has changed its side and now nothing can hinder its course. Kashmiris have survived by keeping faith of fate, but fate being unkind has kept their fate in the hands of others. Now the Kashmiris want only this thing that they be allowed to shape their destiny. It is a a revolution which should surely come to this land. It will not stop through the efforts of any one, he may wish or not. After the end of night, there is always a new morning and then sun set".*[188]

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Fazli Manzoor ***Luka Siyasat***, p.28.

2. In vernicular the expression is used in terms of extreme disdain and hatred.

3. The word 'owl' in Kashmiri folk literature is used as a bad omen. But in context under reference, it is referred to the dynasty responsible for robbing the very independent character of Kashmir. The expression carries brazen contempt against the imperial designs of the Mughals official.

4. The expression conveys that in presence of Mughal one should not fumble to speak in Persian. In other words the proverb means that it needs courage and boldness to criticise the Mughal administration in presence of a Mughal.

5. Aagar Khan was a Mughal governor who is said to have imposed tax on elephants which were non existent in Kashmir. This reflects the greed of Mughal governors for money. See for detail ***Keshir Talmih***, (Kash) Nazir, G. N. p.57. Cultural Academy.

6. It is one of the famous folk plays of Kashmir which dramatically highlights the shortcomings of Mughal system of governance in Kashmir. See, ***Bhande Pether***, Bhagat, M. S. p.89, ***Keshir Luka Pether***, Bhagat. M. S. p.43, ***Luka Siyasat***, Fazli, Manzoor, pp. 81-82.

7. Bamzai, P.N.K. ***History of Kashmir-Political Social Cultural***, p.465. Shali, S. L. ***Kashmir History and Archaeology***, p.264.

8. During the times of Muhammad Shah, the Mughal emperor, there was a man namely Mulla Sharaf-ud-din who acted as Sheikh-ul-Islam. He is said to have followed a policy of persecution of the Hindus and the Shias. There was lawlessness and chaos in the land. Finally the emperor Muhammad Shah, dismissed Inayatullah from the governorship of Kashmir, appointing in his place Abdul Samad Khan. Immediately after taking the charge, Sharaf-ud-din was put to death. There was justice again in land and the Kashmiri bard sang the song referred to in the context. For details see Bamzai, op.cit., p.410.

9. The Bhands or minstrels are a peculiar people. They combine the profession of singing and acting with that of begging., and they travel great distances to enact the folk plays. They are excellent actors, clever at improvisation and fearless as to its results. They are a very pleasant people, and their mirth and good humour form a pleasant contrast to the chronic gloom of the Kashmiri peasant. For full details see. Walter, Lawrence, ***Provincial Imperial Gazetteer of Kashmir***, p.38.

10. It is one of the folk plays of Kashmir. The play focuses on the bunglings of Afghan governance. See also ***Keshur Luka Theatre***, Bhagat M. S. p.62.

11. ***Derzes*** are the lady characters in the play which show the sensual tastes of Afghan officials in Kashmir.

12. The ballad symbolically uncover the Afghan lust for money and refer to the forcible extortion from the fleeced population. Pusp, P.N. *The Reflection of Freedom Struggle in Kashmiri* Verse, published in ***History of the Freedom Struggle in Jammu and Kashmir***, pp.211-212.

13. By inviting the Afghans to take over the administration of the valley, the Kashmiris had hoped a change for good. Little did they imagine that all the beauty and nobility for which Kashmir and its people were famous would be wiped off under their rule. Sorrowfully the poet voices these feelings in the lines under reference.

14. Azim Khan was an incharge Afghan governor in Kashmir. He derived pleasure in engaging Kashmiri as unpaid labours. He fleeced people by imposing multiple of unjust exactions.

15. Jabbar Khan was the last Afghan governor of Kashmir. The tradition runs that Jabbar Khan was once told by some one that it a common notion among the Pandits that snow falls invariably on the ***Shivaratri*** night (13th of the dark fortnight of Phalguna). To test this, he ordered that the Pandits be not allowed to observe this festival in Phalguna (February-March) but in Asarh (June-July). Accordingly it had to be observed on the corresponding night in the latter month. It so happened that even on this night flakes of snow, preceded by a heavy rainfall which had rendered the atmosphere very cold. The Kashmiri bard then, mocking at him, sang. This satirical song.

16. "Folklore" in the ***Encyclopedia of the social science***, Vol.V, p.229.

17. Lord Raglan, *"The Origin of Folk culture"*, **Folklore**, Vols. 57-58 (1946-47) pp.250-260.

18. Hangloo, R.L. *"Agrarian crises and the growth of popular protest"*, paper presented in the three day national seminar in the University of Kashmir.

19. **Ibid.**

20. G.T. Vigne, ***Travels***, Vol.1, p.257.

21. Moorcraft, Williams, ***Travels***, part III, p.42.

22. G.T. Vigne, op.cit., p.Vol, 11, p.137.

23. Sir Francis Younghusband, ***Kashmir***, p.160

24. Hamid-ullah Shahabadi; ***Bebuj nama***, Research Library Kashmir University.

25. M.L.Saqi, ***Keshir Luka Beth***, Vol. III, p.148. Shad Ramzan, ***Keshiren Luka Bethan Hund Intikhab***, p.118.

    The poem highlights the devastation caused by floods, which occurred very frequently during the period under reference.

26. M. A. Wani, *Pushuk Ti Nei Teholuk Ti Na*, Paper published in ***Aspects of Folklore***, (ed) Gulshan Majeed, p.57

27. J.H. Knowls, ***Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings***, p.114. ***Keshir Luka Beth***, Vol. III, M.L. Saqi., p.47.

28. Col. Main Sintgh who replaced Kanwar Sher Singh as the Sikh governor of Kashmir in 1834 did commendable job in mitigating the distress caused by great famine of 1832. He was the best of all the Sikh governors of Kashmir. He brought the valley out of the chaos of famine by bringing grain and fowls from the Punjab and these were distributed among the people. It was for his public welfare measures that Kashmiris mourned his untimely death. For details see, ***Umdat-ut-Twarikh***, Vol.11, p.116. ***Tarikh-i-Kalan*** Ms. Indian National Archives, New Delhi, 11.2-4 (Original MS in the Punjab Archives, Patiala).

29. Farooq Fayaz, *Social Protest as Reflected in Kashmiri Luke Pethers*, Paper published in ***Anhar*** Bi-annual Research Journal of Kashmiri Department, University of Kashmir.

30. G. N. Nazir, ***Keshir Depty*** (Kashmiri Folk Sayings) (Kash) p.112. Cultural Academy.

31. Jawhar, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.8, p.55.

32. Quoted by Herbert Read, "*To Hell With Culture*".

33. The selection of the names as their meanings show, represents the basic characteristics of the holders of the public office. The names are suggested by a master caricaturist in his work ***Bebuj nama*** (Story of Lawlessness). It is steeped in symbolisms depicting the glaring traits of the bureaucracy under Sikh rulers from the Patwari upto the Nazim or Governor. According to author, the whole lot of the officials referred to in the context was responsible for all sorts of the sufferings of the peasantry especially, their aim being simply to grease their own palms and the sustain Sikh power by force. See for details, ***A History of Sikh Rule in Kashmir***, R. K. Parimu, p.5.

34. ***Dastur***, ff.183-187.

35. Ibid; ff.210-300.

36. S. N. Dhar, ***Tales of Kashmir***, p.101.

37. Suri, Sohan Lal, ***Umdat-ul-Tawarikh***, Vol.4, p.166.

38. For details See ***Mathnavi*** available in the Research Department Library, Srinagar.

39. S. L. Suri, Op.Cit., English translation by V. S. Suri, Vol.111, p.116.

40. Shad, Ramzan, Op.Cit., p.117. The details of the famine are touchingly portrayed in this *Lari Shah.*

41. J. S. Dev, ***Natural Calamities in Jammu and Kashmir***, p.89, 101, 137. See also ***History of Kashmir and Kashmiris***, Wake field, pp.137-138.

42. Lawrence, Henry, ***Kashmir and Countries around Indus***, Selections from Calcutta Review December 1844, Vol.11, p.483. Also see Khalil Mir Janpuri, ***Tarikh-i-Kashmir***, MS Research Department, Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, ff.82-83. Moorcraft, Williams, ***Travels***, pp.75-76.

43. *Lari Shah* which contains horrible details about floods, that occurred in the valley during the period under debate.

44. The poem reveals the ravages caused by earthquakes.

45. The folk poem gives a touching picture of famine stricken people.

46. The *Lari Shah* uncovers the officials apathy during the drought conditions in Kashmir.

47. M. L. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth*** (Kashmiri Folk songs), Vol.4, p.116.

48. Ibid; p.138, Also see ***Keshren Luke Betan Hund Intikab***, Shad Ramzan, pp.12, 124.

49. Manzoor Fazili, Op.Cit; p.38.

50. G. N. Nazil, Op.Cit; p.91.

51. Kashmir as described by Younghusband, p.180.

52. Kashmiri Shawl which attained world wide fame prior to Franco. German war proved as a great source of revenue during the period under reference. To be benefited exceedingly, Afghan government in Kashmir established a department known as *Dag Shawl Department.* Its function was to collect taxes imposed on shawl manufacturers. No shawl was removed from the Karkhana for sale unless it bore the stamp of the Dagh Shawl Department. The department was put into

alert with more severity during the period under examination. See for details G.T. Vigne, ***Travels***, Vol.11, 129.

53. Karkhanadars or owners of the industry constituted the wealthy and affluent class among the Muslims of the state. According to Moorcraft there were 550 Karkhandars in 1823, who employed from 30 to 500 Shawl weavers in their establishments. For further details see, Moorcraft, Williams, MS D. 264, pp.30-31. For Dag Shawl, See Robert Thorp, ***Kashmir Misgovernment***. p.43.

54. A Karkhana is a house in which looms for making shawls are set up.

55. ***Keshir Rov te Hiktchi Beth***, p.147. (Ed.) Bashir Akhtar, Cultural Academy. ***Keshiren Luke Betan Hund Intikhab***, Shad, p.97.

56. See ***Kashmiri Luke Kathe***, Vol.2,4,5,7. Published by Cultural Academy.

57. M. Y. Teng, *Keshiris Luke Adabas Manz Keshur Samaj,* ***Anhar***, Folklore Number, Kashmiri Department, Kashmir University. Also see Kashmiri Women as depicted in its folk literature, paper presented by Farooq Fayaz in "Three Days Folklore Seminar, organised jointly by Central Institute of Indian Languages and Cultural Academy at Jammu, 1996.

58. Quoted by Bazaz, ***History of Freedom Struggle in Kashmir***. p.115.

59. K. M. Pannikar, ***Gulab Singh***, p.152.

60. The Dogra propaganda that Kashmir was their purchased property gained so much currency among the public that even the famous contemporary poet Sir Mohammad Iqbal Laments over this cheap sale.
Ai bade Sabha ghar be jeneva Guzr Kuni,
Harfe duyi be Majlis Aqwam baz goi,
Dehkan o Kishto Joye Khayaban Farokhtand,
Qume farokhtand ve chi Arzan farokhtand.
(O breeze, if thy happen to go Geneva way,
Carry a word to the nations of the world,
Their fields, their crops, their streams,
Even the peasants in the vale,
were Sold .... Alas!
How cheap was the sale).

61. P. N. Bazaz, Op.cit., p.127.

62. As per the evidence available, the institution of Begar (forced labour) was in operation here in Kashcmir from the earliest times. The earliest mention of Begar is in the Rajatarangni (V-172-174) when King Sankarvermana employed villagers to carry the baggage of, and supplies for army. There is mention of

Begar also in the time of Zain-ul-Abidin, as well as during the rule of many succeeding Sultans. During the Mughal rule this developed into a regular institution, particularly when huge armies of porters were required to carry the baggage of the emperors and their retinue during their frequent visits to the valley. In Afghan, Sikh and Dogra rule, the officials proved more brutal and harsh masters in the employment of forced labour. The institution during the period under discussion reduced the peasantry to the worst class of slaves. For details see Ishaq Khan's ***Some Aspects of Corvee.*** Robert Therp, ***Kashmir Misgovernment.*** pp.64-66.

63. The year 1862 witnessed the creation of a unique agrarian institution in Kashmir, which led to the emergence of a new class of landed aristocracy. This new institution was called as "Chak". The creation of the institution known as "Chak" was motivated by two objectives; to bring the follow land of the valley under cultivation and to create a class of favourites. For details see A. Wingate, Report, J. K> A, F. No:76 of 1896, J.KA. F. No:16, 1902.

64. It was yet another device of fleecing the people particularly the peasantry. It may be remembered that the state realised its share both in cash as well as in kind. A Kashmiri peasant, who always suffered for want of cash money had to seek the help of money lenders known in vernacular as ***Waddar*** to pay off the official cash demand. These ***Warddars*** exploited the helplessness of poor peasants and provided them money against exorbitant rate of interest. For details about ***Waddars*** see Lawrence, ***Valley***, p.5. In order to check the exploitation of the money lenders, the state passed a law in 1928 by which the interest rate was fixed. However, the law remained only a dead letter. See Glancy Commission Report vice ***Dastawaizat***, pp.137-138.

65. See Lawrence, ***Valley***, p.403.

66. The horrible details about the exploitation of Chakdars have been dramatically depicted in this Kashmiri folk play, ***Chekweli Pether.*** For the effective presentation of the play the bhands of Akingam and Vathora were presented certificates of merit in one of the folk drama festivals organised at Tagore Hall, Srinagar by Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy.

67. ***Kuliyat-i-Mehjoor***, p.187, Cultural Academy, edited by M. Y. Teng.

68. See Wingate Report, Lawrence, ***Valley of Kashmir***, p.414. ***Atash-i-Chinar***, pp.449-90.

69. **Ibid.**

70. Yousuf Saraf, ***Kashmiris Fight For Freedom***, p.307.

71. The payment of Land revenue fixed as 1/3 in kind was known as ***Mujwaza***. See Lawrence, ***Valley***, 403, Galancy commission Report vide ***Dastawaizat***, pp.137-138.

72. The ***Mujwaza*** caused much havoc to the peasantry because by robbing of 1/3 of the produce in kind, the peasant was left with a small quantity of produce hardly sufficient to fulfill has basic food needs. The woes and the wails of Kashmiri peasant caused by this unwarranted exercise is depicted very painfully in *Lari Shah* entitled ***Mujawaza nama***. See for details poem, ***Kashir Luke Beth***, Vol.III, M.L. Saqi, p.138.

73. Younghusband, ***Kashmir***, pp.184-185. P. N. Bazaz, ***Inside Kashmir***, pp.202-203.

74. M. S. Bhagat, ***Keshir Luke Pether***, p.31.

75. **Ibid.**

76. Dewan Anant Ram, Report, *Majuma* 137. Urudu and Persian 1876, 1877, Jammu Archives.

77. Quoted by D. N. Dhar, p.122.

78. **Ibid.**

79. Their duties are to watch the crops while in the ground, and the Government share of the same is being carried to the Government store under his provision. It was said to be a common instance of oppression for the Shaqdar to extort money from the zamindars by threatening to accuse him of stealing the Government grain. He (Sazowul) was the official who was over the Shakdars. There was one Sazowul for about every ten villages. His duties were to inspect the Shaqdars and report to his kardar. It was said that he commonly extorted money from the Shaqdars, in the same way as Shaqdars would demand from the zamindars.

81. A. Wingate, *Report*, p.56.

82. ***Wahab Hajini***, (Ed.) M. L. Saqi, p.18, Sahatiya Academy, New Delhi. Also See ***Kulyat-i-Wahab***, (Ed.) Mohi-ud-Din Hajini. (Introduction).

83. M. Y. Teing, ***Kuliyat-i-Maqbool*** Section *Greesy Nama*, pp.52-53.

84. **Ibid**; p.56.

85. Robert Thorp, Op.Cit., p.22.

86. M. L. Saqi, ***Wahab Hajini***, p.19.

87. **Ibid**; p.19.

88. P. N. Ganjoo (Ed.) ***Kuliyat-i-Azad***, p.277.

89. P. N. Bazaz, Op.Cit., p.194.

90. M. Y. Teing, ***Kuliyat-i-Mehjoor***.

91. D. N. Dhar, ***Socio-Economic History of Kashmir***, p.95.

92. E. F. Knight, ***Where There Empires Meet***, p.29.

93. These saying reflect the inner pain and discontent of Kashmir peasantry. If a serious decoding of the folk sayings is made, it is certainly to help in understanding the peasant reaction to the official barbarities and oppression.

94. The metaphoric expression is a satire in protest against the unjust and corrupt mechanations of revenue officials.

95. G. N. Aatish, ***Kashmiri Folk Songs***, Vol.VII, p.5, 17. In context of the song referred to, the assertion of Lawrence that everything in Kashmir was taxed except air and water falls short of merit and objectivity. For ensuring the constant supply of canal water for irrigation purposes and even for ablution, peasant was forced to grease the palms of official incharge of the supply.

96. M. L. Saqi, ***Kashir Luke Beth***, Vol.III, p.158.

97. Because of medieval means of communication, technological backwardness, prevalence of feudal expenditure pattern and the meagre resources at the disposal of the government, the problem of raising labour power for carriage and construction purposes on nominal wages formed a critical feature of the Sikh and the Dogra administration. The wide extension of State boundaries under the Dogras and the threat of Russian expansion in the north of Kashmir towards the end of the 19th century form some of the causes responsible for the frequent call of Begar. For details see ***British Policy Towards Kashmir***, F. M. Hussanian. See also, Mohammad Ishaq Khan, "Some aspects of Corvee (Begar) in Kashmir", *Research Bi-annual*, Vol.II, 1976. Moorcraft, MS. EURD-264, p.119.

98. Moorcraft, MS. EURD-264, p.119. See also R. Logan, *Report on the Financial Condition of Kashmir State*, Delhi, 1981. Micro Film of this document is available in National Archives of India) p.79, Mirza Saif-ud-Din, Op.Cit; Vol.1, ff.29, 62, 72. According to Moorcraft the State had the right to call upon the cultivators and the artisans to render a certain amount of work for the state and its officials without any payment or at a very low rate. To quote M. I. Khan that a Sikh soldier was given a free hand to kill the local people. M. I. Khan, *Perspectives on Kashmir : Historical Dimesions*, Srinagar, 1983, p.54.

99. Hassan, ***Tarikh-i-Hassan***, Vol.II, p.781.

100. **Ibid**; p.792.

101. Neve, ***Things Seen in Kashmir***, p.78.

102. Also see Braikman, ***Wrong in Kashmiri - Kashmir oppressed***, p.12.

103. Quoted by Bazaz.

104. Dhar, Op.cit, p.159.

105. Annesley, ***Our Visit to Hindustan, Kashmir and Ladakh***, p.162.

106. **Ibid**; 413.

106(b) It is a kind of shoes woven out of straw. It is cheap and less slippery on the paths covered with frozen snow.

107. Glancy Commission Report vice ***Dastawaizat***, p.142. Lawrence, Valley, pp.412-13.

108. Farooq Fayaz, *Social protest reflected in Kashmiri Luke Pethers*, Article published in ***Anhar***. 1999, p.105.

109. Lawrence, Op.Cit; 411, Biscoe, ***Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade***, pp.90-91.

110. Ibid; E. F. Knight, pp.68-70.

111. Mohi-ud-Din Hajini, ***Kulyat-i-Wahab***, p.113. M.L. Saqi, ***Wahab Hajini***, p.19.

112. Dr. Neve, Op.Cit; p.140.

113. The song was sung for me by few village ladies at the village Tekuin of District Pulwama (Unpublished).

114. E. F. Knight, ***Where Three Empires Meet***, pp.68-69.

115. Gilgit attained great strategic importance in the second half of the 19th century for British Indian Government. The establishment of political office at Gilgit was also part of this diplomatic strategy. The Euphoria of Russian expansion in the neighborhood of North Kashmir gave rise to recurring military excursions, which resulted in the frequent call of Kashmiri cultivators to carry baggage and other supplies for troops stationed in Gilgit, Baltistan and Askardu. See for details F. M. Hussanians, ***British Policy Towards Kashmir***, p.62. In this Kashmiri folk play ***Angrez Pether*** a gruesome picture of Kashmiri porters is shown who accompanied English adventurer on his way to hazardous ridges of Gilgit terrain.

115(b) M. S. Bhagat, Op.Cit; p.126.

116. Lawrence, ***Valley***, p.413. Also see Tyndale Biscoe, Op.Cit; p.236. Robert Thorp, Op.Cit; p.45.

117. Tyndale Biscoe, Op.Cit; pp.90-91. Also see Annesley, ***Our visit to Hindustan, Kashmir and Ladakh.***

118. Quoted by Dhar, p.127.

119. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.III, p.113. It may also be noted here that upto 1947, it was obligatory upon the villagers to construct and repair the canals and embankments. See for further details - Unpublished Thesis of m. Y. Ganai under the title of *Emergence and Role of Muslim Conference in Kashmir*, p.68.

120. Pandits though formed a microscopic minority in Kashmir, but under the close patronage of Dogra rulers, this community enjoyed multiple of privileges and incentives. The revenue administration was exclusively being controlled by the people of this community. According to oral and written evidences, the people played havoc with the Muslim peasantry. it is perhaps, on this ground that a folk expression "Bata go grete", (Pandit is just like a stone mill which grinds the grains into power) has been coined in the vernacular. For details see Yousuf Saraf's ***Kashmiris Fight for Freedom.*** Bazaz, ***Inside the Kashmir***,. p.232.

121. During my field trip to village Bandipora,an important stage on the way to Guraz, I was introduced by one Khazir Bhat, a local resident to an aged lady, namely 'Fazi' who recited this song to me. (Unpublished).

122. In the first place, the residents of Srinagar city were exempted from Begar. Secondly, because of its close proximity to Durbar, officials Took every interest to please the inhabitants by way of providing them Sheli (in husked rice) on controlled rates.

123 G.T.Vigne, at, vol II, p.128 Moorcroft, HSEUR F. 107, p107. Young husband, ***Kashmir***, p.178 Brigid Keenan, ***Travels in Kashmir***, p.175

124. George Forster who visited Kashmir in 1783, wrote "In Kashmir are seen merchants and commercial agents of the most of the principal cities of northern ends, also of Tartary, Persia and Turkey who at the same time advance their fortunes and enjoy the pleasure of fine climate. Travels, Vol. II, P.21, Also see. ***Keshur Encyclopedia***, PP.213-215. Vol. III, Cultural Academy.

125. Farooq Fayaz, "Genesis of Labour Unrest in Kashmir", (Historical Perspective).

126. Shawl weavers were required to pay number of taxes and still worse a new law was introduced which forbade any weaver, whether ill or half blind or old and tired, to abandon his loom unless he could find some one to replace him though, it was also forbidden to leave the valley without the Maharaja's permission,

many weavers risked their lives to escape from the valley. For details see G. T. Vigne, Travels, Vol.II, p.223. ***Sheeraza***, (English) Cultural Academy, p.28.

127. Robert, Op.Cit., 43.

128. Ibid.

129. Younghusband, ***Kashmir***, p.178.

130. M. L. Saqi, ***Wahab Hajini***, p.20.

131. Schonberg, ***Travels in India and Kashmir***, 11, pp.105-106.

132. Wajit-u-Tawarikh, f.60.

133. Punjab served as a great rescue place for Kashmiri migrants. A territory which was under the control of British India employed innumerable benefits both at land and in the industry. So this was a great source of attraction for jobless Kashmiri labourers and artisans. For reference See ***Tales of Kashmir***, S. N. Dhar, ***Folk Tales of Kashmir***, J. H. Knowls.

134. Shawl weavers equation with mellow places the weaver at the lowest ebb of misery and economic poverty. Even our village folk who were always craving for two times bread, developed uncompromising dislike for the vegetable.

135. Abdul Ahad, ***Kashmir to Frank Fort***, p.188.

136. The song gives a pathetic narration of shawl weaver. This was transmitted to me by a professional Shawl weaver of Chattabal, Gh. Rasool Dar. The song is not published in any of the Kashmiri Folk song collection.

127. For details see, J.K.A.F. No.313-E of 1865. Robert Thorp, Op.Cit, pp.47-48, Hassan Shah, ***Tarikh-i-Kashmir***, p.98.

138. See Shiekh Muhammad Abdullah, ***Aatish-i-Chinar***, p.24.

139. P. N. Bazaz, ***Inside Kashmir***, p.78.

140. S. M. Abdullah, ***Atash-i-Chinar***, p.24.

141. Lawrence, ***Valley of Kashmir***, p.35.

142. Madusudan Ganju, ***Textile Industry in Kashmir***, p.109.

143. ***Robert Thorp***, Op.Cit, p.47. F. M. Hussanian, *The Shawl-Bauf Agitation of 1865*, Article published in ***Sheeraza***, (Eng.) p.28.

144. Kripa Ram, who was the governor of Kashmir gave strong orders to crush the uprising. Dogra forces at Srinagar under the command of Col. Bajay Singh,

charged guns and spears in the direction of the procession. Scores of people drowned into the marshy canal and 28 dead bodies were reported to have been returned to the people by the army. Some leaders of the agitation were put to death and some were driven out of the state. For details see Arthur Brinekman, ***The Wrongs of Kashmir***, p.35. Nabba Shah, ***Wajeej-ut-Tawarkh***, p.201. Also Sahibzada Hassan Shah, ***Tarikh-i-Kashmir***, p.98.

145. Shirin Bakshi, *Kashmiri Response to European influences*, Introduction unpublished Ph.D. Thesis.

146. Under the Chairmanship of A. Wingate the first Agrarian settlement Commission was set in motion. It signaled the dawn of new era in the history of Revenue administration in Kashmir. Its recommendations were of far reaching importance in the annals of Agrarian History of Kashmir.

147. Since the Maharajas considered the entire land of the state as their family property, the right of ownership thus rested on the state and was not granted until the first quarter of the current century.

148. See for elaborate details ***Aatsh-i-Chinar***.

149. With the establishment of English Residency in Kashmir and the influx of European travellers and missionaries, brought with them new currents of western ideology. The Dogra policy under the new influence also under went a change. These started a series of public welfare measure which until now was a dream in fancy.

150. Director Sericulture to First Assistant to President, 31 March, 1920, J.K.A. Vide Zutshi ***Emergency of political Awakening in Kashmir***, p.223.

151. In 1924, the Silk Factory workers were paid daily wage of four and a half annas per head which was obviously too inadequate, in view of the rising cost of living and the huge profit it earned. Inspite of their repeated representations to the authorities, government took repressive measures to silence the agitating mood of the workers. Hari Singh who was the commander-in-chief, ordered his troops to open fire on the workers. This resulted in the death of several workers. Almost the entire Muslim sector of the city is said to have gone without meals because of the pain of feeling and sorrow. For details see, ***Tahrik-i-Huriyat-i-Kashmir***, Rashid Taseer, Vol.1, p.66.

152. Saraf, Kashmir Fight For Freedom, p.351.

153. Lawrence, Valley.

154. Wahab, op.Cit; p.18.

155. Hassan, ***Tarikh-i-Hassan***, Vol.III, p.430.

156. Quoted by Bamzai, ***History of Kashmir***, p.707. Bazaz, Op.Cit; 140.

157. Bazaz, Op,.Cit; p.144.

158. Shiekh Muhammad Abdullah was born at Soura, a village ten Kilometers away from Srinagar in 1905. After doing his M.Sc. he was appointed a teacher in government High School Baghi-Dilawar Khan. Moved by the abject poverty of Kashmiris and the oppressive and humiliating behaviour of the Dogra administration, he resigned from the government service and took active part in the struggle for freedom. For details see Autobiography ***Atash-i-Chinar, Sheeraza, Sheri-i-Kashmir Number,*** Cultural Academy.

159. Since the formation of political associations was banned in Kashmir, the Indian return Muslim educated youth formed, what is known as the "Reading Room Party", in the garb of which they wanted a platform to bring all the educated youth together for devising ways and means to fight out the injustice done to the Muslim community in general and the educated Muslim youth in Particular: Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah took active part in the deliberations of the Reading Room Party. See for details S. M. Abdullah, ***Atash-i-Chinar***, Under the secretary ship of S.M.Abdullah, the leaders of the party organised secret public meetings in which they induced the people to cultivate spirit of sacrifice without which freedom would be a distant dream.

160. P.N.K. Bamzai, Op.Cit; p.713.

161. P.N.Bazaz, ***Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir***, p.154.

The 13th July, the red letter day in the freedom struggle of Kashmir saw the beginning of the gigantic force behind the mass movement. It was as remarked by Zutshi, the first ever open public challenge to Maharaja Hari Singh's government. (See for detail, *Emergency of Political Awakening in Kashmir*, Zutshi, p.228.

162. The commission was set up to look into the Muslim grievances and the recommendation made by the commission provided a new lease of life in the dull lives of Kashmiris.

163. Glancy Commission Report vide ***Dastawaizat***, p.154.

164. The folk song composed by Kashmiri women was sung in admiration of Shiekh Muhammad Abdullah and was addressed as Sultan, the real King of Kashmir.

165. Manzoor Fazli, ***Luke Siyasat***, pp.68-70.

166. **Ibid.**, p.69.

167. **Ibid.**, p.69.

168. Revealed to me by Dr. Afzal Wani, Reader, *Law*, Aligarh Muslim University.

169. The song attributes some mystic merits to the Shiekhs personality.

170. The song gained wide currency in the thirties of the present century.

170b. Mehjoor was born in the village Mitrrgama of Tehsil Pulwama in 1885. He started his career as a petty employee in the revenue department. Inspite of being government employee, he did not fail in projecting the woes and wailings of his countrymen through his poetic verses. His poems generated great enthusiasm among the Kashmiri freedom lovers and for his nationalistic appeal, he was acknowledged as the National poet of Kashmir. For full details see *Kuliyat, Mehjoor*, (ed) M.Y. *Teing. Best of Mehjoor* (eng) cultural Academy. *Mehjoor Shinasi*, M.Y.Teing, *Kashmiri Zuban Aur Shairi;* Ab. Ahad Azad, *Keshri Adback Tawarikh;* Shafi Shariq Aur Naji Munawar, p.253-255; *Mehjoor, His age and poetry;* G. N. Firaq, Paper Published in *The Literary Heritage of Kashmir*, p.209, ed. Kalla.

171. Abdul Ahad Azad was a contemporary of Mehjoor. A Primary School Teacher, Azad authored first literary History of Kashmiri. He was deeply moved on seing the existing economic order of the society and the age old political slavery, aristocratic social set-up which made life difficult and miserable for the common man, See Naj Munawar and Shafi Shauq, Op.Cit, pp.256-257.

172. ***Kulyat-i-Mehjoor***, ed, M.Y.Taing.

173. **Ibid.**

174. F.M. Hussanian, ***Mehjoor-The Poet and Revolutionary***

175. S.N. Dhar, *Freedom Struggle as seen in Folklore*; published in ***History of Freedom Struggle in Kashmir***, Yasin, Rafique, p.231.

176. They were younger talent and all the three poets voiced the woes of the toiling peasants and labourers.

177. The Muslim poets of Punjab played a significant role in inculcating the sense of patriotism among the Kashmiri Muslims. Among those poets, who dedicated themselves to the cause of Kashmiri Muslims, the name of Alama-Iqbal stands prominent. See for reference- Sabir Afaqi, ***Iqbal-Aur-Kashmir***, p.38. Khan, ***Freedom Movement in Kashmir***, p.200. P.N. Bazaz, ***Inside Kashmir***, p.111.

178. P. N. Pushp, *The Reflection of Freedom struggle in Kashmiri Verse* p.213.

179. Ganjoo, ***Kuliyat***, Op.Cit; 222.

180. Bazaz, Op.Cit; p.301. Ganjoo, ***Kuliyat***, Op.Cit; p.207.

181. Under the banner of National Conference, Kashmiri poets did lot to develop a secular nationalistic make up of the Kashmiri society.

182. M.A.Wani, *Pushuk Ti Nei Tcholak Ti Na*, Paper Published in ***Kashmir Folklore Studies***.

183. F.Fayaz, *Folk literature-source of social History of Kashmir*, Paper presented in three Day, National Seminar Organised by Centre of Central Asian Studies.

184. M.A.Ashraf, ***Folklore Studies***.

185. Robert Thorp, Op.Cit; p.64.

186. G.N. Nazir, ***Keshir Depety***, p.123.

187. Walter Lawrence, Op.Cit; p.401.

188. Sadiq. G.M; Presidential Address, 1953 quoted by Hussanain in ***Kashmir Misgovernment***, (ed.) p.94.

CHAPTER Fourth

Folk Religion in Kashmir

Though the Islamic influences had started being felt in Kashmir as early as the beginning of the eighth century[1], but it did not make much headway until the first quarter of the 14th century[2]. It took Islam almost six centuries to secure a strong foot-hold in Kashmir. The latest investigations in the field reveal that Brahminism continued to be the religion of the masses even after the establishment of the Muslim Sultante in Kashmir[3].

No doubt, the mountain bound valley of Kashmir remained unexposed to the military exploits of the Muslim conquerors, but nothing such could deter the zealous Muslim saints, scholars and missionaries from Persia and central Asia to penetrate into the 'paradise of east' to acquaint the locals with new religeo-cultural influences and ideas . It was infact, the role played by these foreign Muslim missionaries which helped in creating a situation-conducive for the propagation of teachings of Sufi oriented the new religion the valley[4]. Since the majority of the Muslim missionaries who poured into the valley in the fourteenth and fifteenth century belonged to Persia, Bukhara and other parts of Central Asia, their religious outlook was predominantly fashioned by humanistic approach[5]. This was indeed, as for more than two hundred years Islam had, in Central Asia and Persia, been similarly influenced by the dogmas of Mahayana Buddhism and Upanishadic philosophy, resulting in the cult of Islamic

mystics[6]. Fortunately the new religion entered the valley in the form, being carried there by elightened Sufis like *Bul Bul Shah*[7]. With their humanistic approach to religion, they found a ready and sympathetic response from the Kashmiris, already permeated with the teachings of mystic saints and 'seers'.

The celebrated safis who had come with a mission, after observing deep committment of the people towards their age old social traditions and cultural traits did not offend them by suggesting drastic changes in their socio-religio- cultural fabric; instead, they allowed the new converts to retain some of the old Traditions and customs of their erstwhile religions which in the course of time were assimilated in the religious life of the Muslims[8]. This, indeed, resulted in the development of somewhat, unique features in the socio-religious history of the Muslims in a geographically isolated region, thus drawing a striking contrasts with the Muslims of the other parts of the world[9].

It was during this period of historical transition that the need was felt to retain the religio-cultural identity of the valley. Thanks to its rich religious and philosophic traditions, Kashmiris rose to the occasion and produced a roll of distinguished mystics and saints who by dint of their personal merit and noble deeds proved to be the living embodiments of Kashmiri culture and religion[10].

Prominent among them were' *Lal Ded*[11] and *Sheikh Nur-ud-din*[12]. If on the one hand, *Lal Dad* reaffirmed her faith in the teachings of Kashmiri Savism, Sheikh Nur-din revived the indigenous mystic cult 'Rishyut'[13] and expressed his firm faith in the relevance of the rishi order. Though with different approaches, both were

united in their fight against the priviledged religious elite, and their support for the under priviledged. So deep was their influence on the mind of the people and of the age that major portion of Kashmiri folk poetry is dedicated to their exemplary contribution towards the development of religion and culture[14]. To quote Ishaq Khan, "*Lalla's* verses against the social and spiritual pretensions of the Brahmans set in motion new forces rejecting the latter's cherished idea that social statics was determined by caste.[15] With equall velocity, *Shiekh Nur-ud-din* denounced the Muslim ulema, proud of their rich pedigree and descent". Nur-ud-dins condemnation of Mulhas and *Lal Ded's* ihatred towards of Pandit Brahmans (both priviledged sections of the society) was infact the exposition of their intense urge to see that the unpriviledged or common folk come forward to shape their destinies themselves. It is this association of the two eminent religious personalities of the medieval Kashmir with the common masses which played vital role in fashioning the distinctive collective religious behaviour of the people of Kashmir.

The Muslim 'Rishis' of Kashmir adopt certain practices, which if analysed in the light of Sharia' seemed as completely unislamic, But the serious study of the *'Rishi'* practices reveal that these practices echo Kashmiri's deep committment to his distinctive social cultural milaux, which even the great tradition could not erradicate. to quote Mohib-ul-Hassan, "popular Islam in Kashmir thus became diluted with foreign elements, and their character it has retained untill today16. Commenting on the religious synthesis, R.K. Parimoo holds, "History has perhaps very few examples of a people, numerically so small, who have in the course of long succession of

centuries suffering and struggle, so paid so high a price in order to preserve their ancient traditions and culture[17].

The assertion of an European Traveller seems quite plausible that "the traveller finds himself face to face with three cultures and religious systems of Asia living side by side. These are Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim. The distinctive characteristic of Kashmir is that these three stages are not merely stages in its past history but are living as co-extant forces"[18]. A scholar finds all these traits and characteristics in the popular religion practised by the majority of the common folk.

What is Folk Religion?

The primary Justification for the discipline known as folk religion is that it raises the important question of what religion is? Whether or in what ways the religious dimension is important? what place and function religion has in human life generally and what justification there is, if any, in the claim that religion discloses to us something essential about the human condition.

Apart from all these controversial shades resulting out of the different propositions of religion, one thing is certain that the knowledge which is the subject matter of elite religion or great tradition is not somewhat that is demanded with accuracy in common religion[19] or in folk religion. The folk religion takes into account the social, cultural and physical environment. It is based on the observed phenomenon of religion. The fact for example, that men do believe and believe sometimes most tenaciously and nobly and that their beliefs have social approval and consequence. In

that sense religion exists as an observable fact of human life for which there is plenty of folk and popular evidence[20].

In folk religion people associate immidiate goals with any particular activity[21]. After all, a large part of human society consists on a satisfaction of material needs[22]. If a rice farmer believes that he will increase the yield of his land by visiting any shrine or a sacred place at the time of ploughing and sowing, he will do that. There is every evidence to show that the people visit different religious places likely to prey for the curing of disease or to fulfill other material ends. This and hundred of activities of a similar kind and motive and at comparable level are what religion has meant to many, if not the majority of the people.

If all these kinds of activities and the beliefs which are associated with them are excluded from the domain of religion but then what name are they to be known with? If we are to reserve religion to mean only fundamental, orthodox and conservative conserning with the eternal unchanging and approved by elite and literate, than we have to find another word we can use in order to refer to all other much more temporal and mundane beliefs, desires, activities which form the basis of folk religion[23]. Let us for a moment allow that all these, too can be called religion we now have two reference when ever we use the word religion. At one level, religion means concern with a distinct idea or eternal good. At another level it means concern with ever present mundane needs[24]. The only justification for using the same word for both is that there is some connection between the two. Let us suppose that the word religion can be used for both, it is still evident that we shall have to put some kind of adjective in front of the word religion in each case. The second obviously will be folk

religion Suffice to say that there are two levels of religion, the upper level, which expresses itself in terms of what is generally regarded as orthodoxy which include orthodox beliefs and orthodox practices. This is the kind of religion which orthodox religious authorities prescribe to be fallowed and then there is the lower level which expresses itself spontaneously in folk beliefs and practices of all kinds. The existence of these two levels has been observed in almost all religions[25].

In short, folk religion in a simple version may be termed that shade of popular religion which is generally characterised by folk practices and customs socially approved and which over dominates reason faith and conviction. In case of Muslims, the latter type of religion is governed by the Quranic injections and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The sunna and shariat governs the life system and the mental make-up of the faithful. Here a person enjoys no liberty to deviate from the fundamental principles. Any deviation from the sunna' is described as 'kufr' 'shirk' and 'bida' and subject to severe punishment in accordance with the injections of the Quran[26].

Contarary to this, in folk religion there exists a variety of cherished local cultural beliefs and practices, originating from different religious sources and social systems dully approved and recognised by the society.

Chief Characteristics of Folk Religion in Kashmir

One of the striking characteristics of popular Islam in Kashmir is the loud group recitation of an *Aurad-i-Fatthiyya*[27] by the majority of the Kashmiri Muslims in mosques immediately after the morning prayers. The pioneers in the formative

phase of the history of Islam in Kashmir in the fourteenth century as mentioned earlier, reconciled itself to and without disturbing the socio-religio cultural fabric of the society, a legacy of the Hindu Buddhist religious systems. As a result of the compromising attitude especially demonstrated by scholarly saint *Syed Mir Ali Hamadani*, the neo-converts were allowed to retain some of the traditions of their former religions which in the course of time were assimilated in the religious culture of the Muslims[28].

It had been the age old practice of Hindus in the valley to recite mantras loudly in the temples especially in the early morning hours. *Mir Syed Ali Hamadani*, who had a keen anthropological, sense understood the efficacy of the popular mode of social behaviour, drafted a unique prayer under the title of *Aurad-i-Fatthiyya.* He allowed the new converts to recite it in chorus loudly to lessen the captivating effect of the Hindu mantras Ishaq Khan while appreciating the wisdom of Mir Hamadani writes, "It goes to his (Mir Ali Hamadani) credit that instead of taking a narrow view of the religious situation in Kashmir, he showed an acute discernment and a keen practical sense in grasping the essential elements of popular Kashmiri religious culture and ethos, and gave creative expression to these in enjoining his followers in the valley to recite '*Aurad-i-Fatthiyya*' aloud in a chorus in mosques"[29].

Such a simple practice of invoking God's help did not call for either animal sacrifice or the beating of drums as it was in the case of Kashmiri Pandits. The lud recitation of 'Aurad' produced such an appealing effect in the minds of Hindus that they willingly came forward to embrace Islam. While showing regard for the local religious ethos in allowing neo-Muslims to read Aurd-i-Fat thiyya aloud in chorus,

the Sayyid acording to Khan, "demonstrated a keen sense of practical wisdom and judgement in lying a firm foundation for the gradual assimilation of the folk in Islam[30]. A conservative chronicler like srivara seeing to have been so impressed by the novelty of God being praised in collectively by the rich and the poor together that he could not conceal his feelings about the loud prayers of faithful in the Jam'a mosque of Srinagar. Thus he writes, "It was here that the Yavanas (Muslims) chanted Mantras and looked graceful like thousand lotuses with humming bees"[31].

Right from the time, the prayer was drafted by the exalted scholar saint, the tradition of reciting the prayer loudly in Kashmir mosques continued with same vigour and zeal. Its continuance, no doubt, provide an index of the committment of the people to the deep rooted popular tradition and their cultural psyche. By providing a folk orientation, to the new message of Islam in Kashmir, Mir Ali Hamadani not only made Islam intelligible to the majority of the common folk, but it provided a tremendous psycho-religious comfort to the neo-Muslims seemed to be unwilling to dissociate themselves compledie from their ancestral religious behaviour[32].

No doubt, during the concluding phase of our period of study, the practice of reciting the *'Aurad'* came under sharp criticism by the leaders and followers of *Ahl-i-Hadith* movement who dubbed it as an activity with no cemented religious foundation. But the majority of the Muslims in the valley could not succumb to their pressure and the practice continued and remained in tradition. The popular love and the people's attachment to this folk religious practice can be well ascertained from these lines of Kashmiri folk song.

Bed dargāh khānaqāh, terwei
Teti Aurād bedi bedi pervei
Temi angane berkat servei
Bed dargāh khānqah, terwei
Teti Aurād bedi bedi pervei [33]

(Let us flock to the shrine of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani situated at khanqah-i-Moula, Let us recite 'Aurad' loudly but in an impressive tune.
It is of course, the gifted spot. It abounds in saintly blessing
The shrine of Khanqah-i-Moula is a place of unimaginable veneration).

Saint Worship

Since Islam in Kashmir was introduced and popularised by Sufi saints belonging to different Sufi orders, as a natural response, people of the land developed an intimate love and reverence for these exalted saints[34]. True to the tradition, Kashmiri in a new scheme of religious frame work sought to find new parallels to their age old traditional gods and deities which once governed their religion behaviour. These parallels they found in the form of venerated saints, who not only acquainted them with the new religious order but provided them certain degree of liberty to remain attached with their traditional religious behavioural pattern. The love of the masses towards their spiritual preceptors did not remain applicable as long as they were alive but it continued even after their death. The same is evident from the fact that hardly in the valley one could find a village town or a city without a 'sufi' or 'reshi' shrine[35].

To my understanding, a close net work of shrine and tombs and their veneration by the common masses was not only prompted by the traditional religious behaviour of the people but the study of the folk material tend us to suggest that the institution was more necessitated by a unique political situation which robbed the

masses of their right of self expression and the dignity of the soul. From the content of the variety of the Kashmiri folk songs, the researcher could easily deduce that the people flocked to these shrines to give vent to their suppressed feelings and emotions, a situation which could hardly be availed outside the shrine premises. A close network of official secret agencies, had sealed every chance for poor Kashmiris to present their grievances before their authorities, regarding the fleecing devices of the corrupt officialdom[36]; hence, they found no other way to revenge the misdeeds of these rapacious officials and the ruling elite, but to present themselves in a shrine and invoke the help of the dead saint with the hope of being relieved from the recurring pain and distress. To quote M.Y.Teing 'In a state of utter confusion, insecurity and mass alienation, these shrines and tombs were acknowledged as the befitting spots by the commoners to address their gravest problems[37]. Though, Lawrence, in his monumental work "The valley of Kashmir" has given an elaborate detail of the institution, but the celebrate, but the celebrated writer has not kept in sight the psychò political necessities, which gave an additional importance to these shrines to serve as the sanctuaries of public grievance and protest. The argument is further substantiated by the following folk verses much in circulation among the rural masses even today:

Dam phuty gēmety sene chi senī
Ya Nabi zēri seni bōz
Dēdy kas bāvav ger chim sēri
Ya Nabi zeri seni boz.[38]

Dastgīr Sēbs Shahi Bhagdadas
Ash chem seri gam kasyum
Halam heth darasm'naz khaneyeri
Ya Nabi zēri sēni bōz.

Shāhi Hamadānas bōni Islams
Sar bō Trāvas dedey tal
Vedy tas seni hal chā seri
Ya Nabi zeri seni boz
Makhdom Sēbs Shāhi Sultāns,
Thazres shūban ches dargah
Dowak ma kanh asi zulman meri
Ya Nabi zeri seni boz

Sheikh Sēb Alamdār Tchrār chu sōnei
Mōyen hal chus sorei sōn,
Mēle chu logmut Tchrar bresverī
Ya Nabi zerī senī bōz.

(We feel soulless in an atmosphere of gloom and disrespect,
Oh, Nabi, (the massager of God) we beg you to give patient hearing to our sufferings.
Whom shall we express our pains?
The people who possess authority and power are all strangers).

Dastagir, the crown of Bhagadad,
We expect, visit to you shrine
Situated at Khanayar,
Shall bring relief to over distresses.
Glory of Hamadan, (Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani)
The founder of Islam in Kashmir
We will pay homage at the outer shrine gate
He is aware of our sufferings
Let us remind him the same.

Mukhdoom Sahab, the king of sultans,
His shrine at the Hari parbat hillock
gives a majestic look,
We look friendless-no one is ready
to share our ailments,
We beg for your spiritual help.

Sheikh Nur-ud-din at tchrar,
is our unquestioned religious leader
Who says? he is not aware of our lot.
The annual fair has begun there at tchrar,
Let us flock to the shrine on Thursday
and seek the blessings of the pir.

In Islam, and precisely on the background of monotheism, there always seems to have been a radical conflict between popular customs and the official religious orthodoxy. Such practices on the level of local populations were either considered old superstitions or condemned as 'bida', or unorthodox innovations. To quote Goldziher, "In no other field has the original doctrine of Islam subordinated itself to such a degree to the needs of its confessors as in the fields of veneration of saints[39]". In fact, the saint worship constituted the major feature of popular Islam not only outside the Arab peninsula but inside the Arab lands also. It remained the major concern of the champions of the orthodox Islam[40]. The religious humanism, exhibited by the venerated saints through their deeds and teachings helped tremendously in creating a religious atmosphere guaranteed maximum degree of liberty not only to the neo Muslims but even to the people who clung to their ancestral religion. This new proposition, in context of Kashmir proved very fruitful in strengthening the basis of folk religion in Kashmir. This is further evidenced by the fact that the shrines of *Mir Sayyid*[41] *Ali Hamdani, Sheikh Nur-ud-din*[42], *Baba Payam-ad-din*[43], *Baba Zain-ud-din*[44] and other sufi and Rishi saints are equally kept in high esteem and veneration by both Muslim and Hindu devotees.

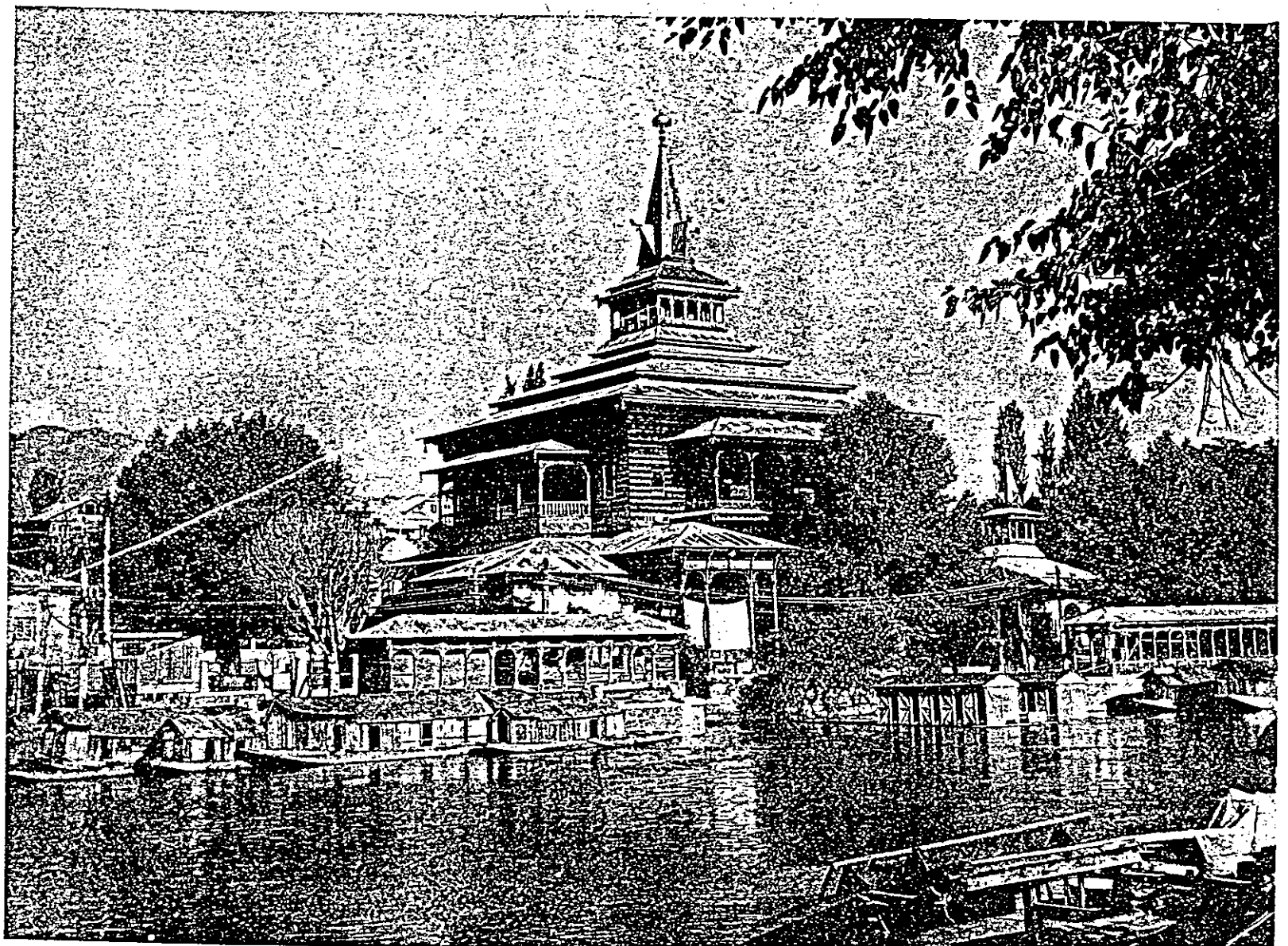
As the dominant characteristic of folk religion has always been to seek the fulfillment of the immidiate material wishes,[45] the people in the valley too visited different Sufi and Rishi shrines for fulfilling their material gains: An attentive examination of the folk material particularly, the folk literature, tend us to hold that a peasent here too, like his fellow brethrn in the rest of the world, visited the shrine with the hope that he might receive good harvest; a barren lady flocked to the tomb

with the purpose that she might be blessed with a child; a sick went with the hope that he might regain health and so on[46]. In addition to this, Kashmiri folk songs reveal that women folk, during the period of our study visited the tombs of the dead saints to invoke their help for the safe arrival of their dear ones who had either been driven away from their fields to under take the forced labour (beggar) or had proceeded voluntarily to the plains of Punjab at the outset of the winter season to earn the necessary livelihood for their family members and other dependents. In the following lines of a Kashmiri folk song, a forlorn Kashmiri women expresses her heart felt concerns for the safe arrival of her dear one. See for example.

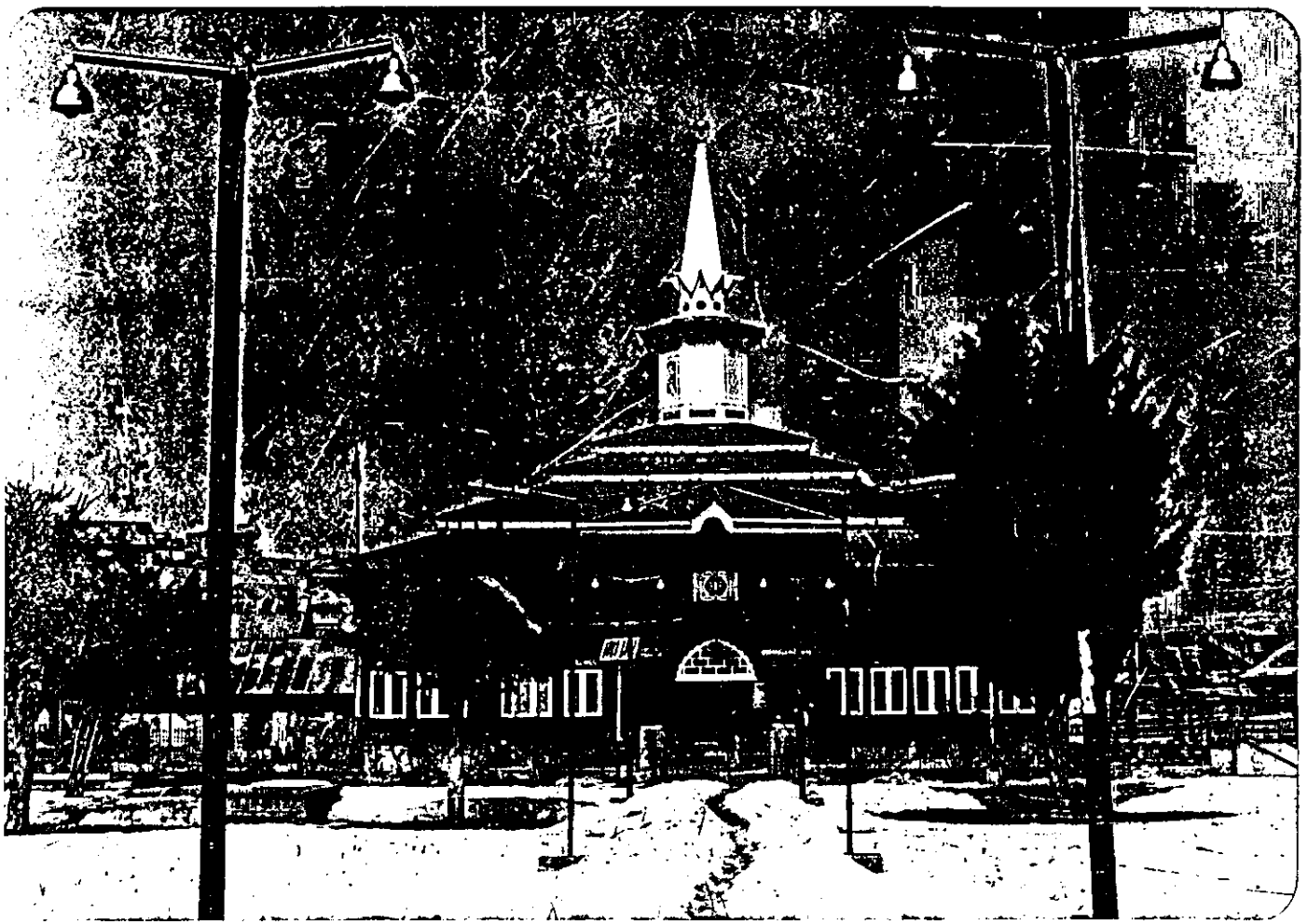
Sane gomei sīr kas bavei,[47]
Yene gomei tane nei amei,
Sane gomei bavei kas.
Lole astane tchengy bozalei,
Sane gōmei bavei kas
Dur balan harde goyomei,
Sante ma veni dilbar āv,
Ashi Muqāme phro bo zalei,
Sane gomei bavei kas

(I am grief stricken, with whom shall I share my pain!
Long time had lapsed, since he had left us.
I will kindle the earthen lamps at the shrine of the local pir,
I am grief stricken whom shall I convey my concerns.
At the very outset of the winter, he had gone across the high snow ladden summits,
The spring has come-Not he!
I shall go to the shrine at Muqam,
There I will take part in the phrov,
I am grief stricken , with whom
Shall I share my pain).

The assertion of Dr. Dieter Sturm holds enough weight, particularly, against the enough weight particularly against the folk religious environ of the valley. He



Shrine of Shah Hamadan, Srinagar.



Shrine of Shiekh Noor-u-din at Tsrar

writes "the great tradition of the normative Islam has never recognised the existence of saints and has no procedure of canonizing them yet saints (awliya) literally (Gods prolege) fill the world of popular Islam, where even living saints possess super natural powers and ability to perform miracles ..... the saints supernatural powers (baraka) does not cease with his death, hence his tomb is considered as repository of saints baraka[48].

While evaluating the deep rooted attachment of an average Muslim with the shrines Lawrence remarks, "It was customary for almost all to visit a particular shrine on different occassions of historical importance for the fulfillment of wishes and cherished goals"[49]. Not only on the occassions of historical importance, the visit to the shrine was considered obligatory on the social occassions like marriage and other related persuits. During the period under survey the bridegroom would not rise above the age old practise of going to pay respect to some neighbouring shrine before leaving for brides house[50]. See how in this below cited 'Wanvun "song, bridegroom is advised by his parents not to show a slightest degree of lapse not in the traditional practice of showing reverence by visiting the shrine before leaving for his bredes home.

Astān atchevun sejde keryzium,[51]
Kelymei Muhammad perīzium.
Astān gathevun hirase keryzeiun
Dechineidāri tal dua mengyzeim
Astān hō chui nōzuk jaye,
Ati ho aye qadam tulyze

(Before you enter the shrine gate
Give a slight bend to your head as token of respect to the saint,
You should first recite 'Kalima',
Be attentive and exercise every caution infront of

the grave of the saint.
You first straight way go to the window on the right,
To visit the shrine demands seriousness,
and sensitivity from the devotee.
Take your steps with utmost care)

Ernest. F. Neve gives a pen picture of the same, when a marriage party once inadvertently missed to salute the grave of a saint, situated on the way to the brides house. The quote him, "I once saw a striking example of the danger of neglecting this rule. A marriage party was crossing a stream, above which stood the shrine of a saint. All of them dismounted and passed over the bridge, but the father of the bridegroom, with the bridegroom in his arms, rode boldly over. The bridge broke, and the horse, father and son were precipitated into the stream, where they lay struggling. I ran up and rebuked the crowd for not assisting the sufferers, but they looked on gloomily and said, the man richly deserved his fate. After some trouble I induced some of my own people to disentangle the men from the horse, and then one of the attendents of the shrine explained to me that within the last ten years, four men who had despised the saint and had ridden over the bridge had been killed"[52].

On their visit to the shrines, village folk (both men and women) could gaze on the corner of the shrine where the saint was said to have spend some period in seclusion. They bowed their heads and with the hands often inter-locked prey in a standing position to enjoin the blessing of the saint[53].

Not only the saints of the foreign origin were kept in high esteem but the shrines of the Rishis were equally kept in high admiration The rural masses attached more significance to the shrines of the local "Rishis" than that of the saints of foreign

origin. According to the folk belief which is even now in circulation in the vernacular, village folk believe that whosoever visits three venerated shrines of Rishis at Bumzo, Tsrar and Muqam, he would be saved from the disastrous fire of the hell.

Yus getchi Bhumezū Tsrār Muqām,
Tas peth chu dozkhun nār harām.[54]

A close association of the general folk with the Rishi saints seemes to be governed more by the historical forces according to which these saints exclusively identified themselves with the common folk as against the foreign saints who for greater part remained associated with the ruling aristocracy[55]. For commoners they symbolised as a bridge between the temporal religion and its folk orietation, rooted firmly in history and the traditions. This is also attested by the fact that the major portion of our folk poetry euogolises the merits of the local Rishi saints as compared to the saints who had come from different parts of Persia and Central Asia[56].

Without entering into further debate the fact remains that Kashmiris developed a religious psyche, which while accommodating the foreign influences remained rooted in the ethos and the aesthetic sensibilities of the society and the same is expressed in different folk melodies like "Rov" and "Watchun".

Deshi Gandeni (Tying of Rags)

A remarkable feature in almost every sanctuary has been the practice of tying or attaching ribbons or pieces of cloth to the windows, iron gates and the decorated walls of the shrine structures. To quote Michael Winter, "In this way the saint according to the believer was literally bound to the obligation to help the pilgrim in

want. If the wish is fulfilled, the pilgrim in want accompanied by other family members and neighbour pay a special visit to the shrine, to offer the special prayers and gifts as a matter of gratitude. The pilgrim often promised such a present to the saint before hand on the condition of course that the latter helps him out"[57].

The remarks expressed by Winter regarding the tying of rags applies truely to the religious behaviour of Kashmiris, who believe that by tying cords, it becomes obligatory for a saint to fulfill the cherished desires of the devotee. The tying of cords had become so symbolic and architypal that it not only became a subject of folk literature but it even found expression in the contemporary creative literature of the period under reference. For instance Maqbool Kralwari, the nineteenth century Kashmiri poet says.

Me Tchonduk baghu bustānan,[58]
Genjim deshe eshqe astānan.

(I made a mad search to find you,
in the beautiful gardens but in vain.
I flocked to the shrine of 'Love' to tie
the cords so that my desires get fulfilled).

The desh or white rags which are tied to the shrine are placed there by the supplicants for off-spring[59] and till a child is born rag is left undisturbed.

Nazr-U-Niyaz

It constitutes as one of the major elements of saint worship not only in Kashmir but in other parts of the world as well. 'Nazr' as commonly practised is a self imposed practice which a person makes with the supernatural. The supplicant, for example a barren woman pledges to offer some thing valuable, if her wish is granted.

Her gift to the shrine is conditioned on the ground that if her wish is not granted, she had no obligation to fulfill her 'nazr'. In other words, it is an exercise whereby hope is linked with action. The critics of the practice hold that the exercise acts as a challenge to the doctrine of divine will and predestiny. Contrary to this, *'Niyaz'* is not determined by any self imposed condition but depends upon the goodwill of the supplicant. It may either be a fallow up action, or a welcome gesture to forsee the successful culmination of the proposed desire or wise.

Wasila

Another common, though not essential element of *'Nazr'* is the use of an intercassor (wasila) who is generally believed to have attained highest spiritual excellence through his exposition of character and merit. In Kashmir context, particularly during the period under discussion people were caught in such a situation of psycho-social crises, where no body could come forward to console the suffering masses. Hence, disillusioned at the discourteous behaviour of both official and religious classes, people flocked to the tombs of dead saints with the intention of receiving their help and aid in addressing their grievances before the supreme power i.e God. A careful study of 'Manqabats[60] belonging to the domain of folk literature, recited by the folk at the shrine and the mosques on Friday congregations and Urs days also reveal that in addition to gain a religious merit, people rushed to the shrines with the hope of being relieved of distresses and suffering caused by the unfriendly socio-political atmosphere. The same feeling is expressed in the fallowing lines of a folk 'Manqabat'.

Halam dērith chi prārān vony keriv imdad ai sultān,[61]
Be kastan hund tehe chuk imdād, buzivdad ie sultān.
Gamav dadev dowakhu esy glr kerymety bozi kus sonei,
Chu derdii kus sanā sonie keriv dil shād aē sultān.

(We wait eagerly for your spritual help,
O, Sultan, (Sheikh Makhdoom Hamza)
You are the true friend aid of unpriviledged and oppressed.
We are reduced to the lowest depths of pennury due to disease, poverty and oppression, Who will listen our woes?
Our hearts are broken by unending glomand grief, Would you like to bring, joy to our ailing souls.

The veneration of the saints often led the ignorant masses to resort to the practices which attracted the wrath of religious orthodoxy at the lather stage of our period of study. But the practices like moving repeatedly around the grave of a dead saint, smearing body and face with the dust at the shrine, making a bend of the body at the shrine entry point and keeping a face towards the grave of the saint at the departing time still continuous, though with little intensity even today. The adherence of the commonners to this practice may also be gleaned from this verse of a Kashmiri 'Rov' song.

Darwāze atchewun ser nemerevyzem[62]
Zēny zem ati chei bed dargah.

(While you (devotee) enter the shrine gate bend your head in the direction of the saints grave, Be catious that the celeberated saint is buried here).

As already stated that there exists a quite good number of shrines through out the length and the breadth of the valley but there are some major shrines, of course, which due to their spritio-religious and historical importanc assumed very significant position in the annals of the history of Muslims and as such attract a large number of devotees. These include Hazratbal shrine,[63] shrine of Sheikh Nur-ud-din, Shrine of

Mukhdoom Sahib,[64] Shrine of Pir Dastager Sahib,[65] Shrine of Baba Payam-ud-din, Shrine of Baja-Zain-ud-din, Shrine of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani at Khanqah[66] and so on.

Pīr - Muridi

Although sufi and Rishi saints owing to their strict ad herence to Shariah, moral rectitude and lofty code of personal conduct had set an example for the immediate disciples and followers to emulate but this message of theirs with the passage of time was permeated by the wicked and ridiculous activities of a newly born class of *mujawirs,*[67] *Pirs, bahaz, khadims*[68] etc, who happened to be more concerned with the material pursuits of this world of 'vanity fair'. With the passage of time, owing to their proximity to the shrine and the active participation in the management of these shrines, they succeeded in cultivating a spiritual connection with the devotees of the saints. These parasites would often undertake extensive field tours to the distant villages particularly at the time of harvest to collect the share of the produce in the name of the saint[69]. The common masses, therefore, more at the behest of these religious heads, were conspicuously marked by the performance of a number of rites, rituals and ceremonies at various shrines and Khanqahs[70]. During the first phase of our period of study , as revealed by the literary evidences, the religious class of *'Pirs'* wielded a considerable clout in the religious environ of Kashmiri society. Any religious and social function was treated as incomplete in the absence of the family *Pir*. The names for the new offsprings in the family were suggested by the pir. Any smallest deviation on the part of the *'Murid'* would invite the displeasure of the *Pir*. There are number of songs which suggest that the pir was considered a person gifted

with religious and spiritual merit. People, particularly in villages eagerly looked forward for the periodical visit of the *'Pir'*. The same situation is penned down in the following lines of a Kashmir folk song.

Pīre vele sōn, pīre vele sōn,[71]
Chani yine, me pheliyum ha deketōn
Pīre vele sōn, pīre vele sōn.
Nike chum gamut kiya nundebōn,
Pīre vele sōn, pīre vele sōn.

(We eagrly wait for your arrival,
Your visit in the house will bring good fortune
for the family members.
A new baby had taken birth in our family,
Your visit in the house is most auspicious).

The belief in the relevence of *'Pirs'* spiritual merit could well be ascertained gleaned from this Kashmiri proverb.

Pir ne bod yekeen bod[72]

(The pir is not great. It is credulity which is great).

In the yet another Kashmiri proverb the acclaimed position of the Pir is recognised beyond doubt. The proverb goes as under.

"Pīr gō Mīr"

(Pir deserves the first attention or pir
is undoubtedly gifted with religious
leadership qualities).

The proverb refered to above shows that inspite of the respect which was paid to the pirs, it was nevertheless fully recognised that they made great demands on the credulity of their followers. This is further substantiated by a long poem in Kashmiri under the title *"pir nama"*[73] written by the nineteenth century Kashmiri poet. *Maqbool Shah Kralwari*. The poem portrays an illustrious picture of the devices and

the mechanations of these *"pirs"*, which exclusively aimed at fleecing the people even of their meagre possessions. Few lines of the poem *'Pir Nama'* are given as under:

Wechan kuni jayi yud pyomut bemārā[74],
Karan shukra zi log zalas shikārā

Ne chus garmi hundei sard baduk
Yemis chui dekhl gomut nagaraduk.
Deri ches thaef gethi ne sahal bozun
Yemis yeti phok dines yetekal rozun
Qadam rety thei karan chuk zara para
Yemis balenuk karun gethi pire chara.
Yi hediye shubi dyon esy teth chi dindar,
Karv tameth ada vothi yam bemar.

(If a pir by chance comes to know about a sick man in the village,
He thanks to God, that a prey had been caught in the net.
The patient does not suffer from any physical ailment, he holds,
It is the result of an evil sprit.
It will take a long time to wade off the evil sprit,
Pir has to stay here for a long time to cure him.
The parents of the ailing person request the pir humbly to stay
with them in the hour oif distress,
Which ever amount we have to pay, we will readily pay,
But the patient should regain health).

Irrational as they were, people generally attributed disease, like small pox, malaria, epidemics, plague and other infectious dreaded diseases to the displeasure of saints and pirs. The pirs were the most demanded lot in the village during the troublesome days [75]. They were invited by the rural folk to lead the special religious prayers. Incase of any infectious disease, there help was sought as the ailment was attributed to the evil spirits rather than the unhygienic rural surroundings. According to S.N.,Dhar, "The intenirant pirs, Faqirs and other so called holy mn put on spiritual

airs and sell charms to the believing villagers to protect their children, women and cattle from the evil eye"[76].

The presence of 'Pir' in the village was considered as the most blissful event. Maqbool Kralwari graphically describes this situation. See for example.

Chi wātān ēqibat yeli jayi malum[77],
Khushi khēdim karan az av makhdoom.
Semith niky bedy yiwan sēri zano mared
Diwan edy moth khowaran wathrān chis garad
Qadam temy sendy buthis byon byon matheni
Garibs kun keriv kath mehrbeni
Khata asi yut kormut os kuta
Meshith go bilkulei asi eyvenez zanh
Saman seri peneny Pirs chi endy endy
Tchoperi chis lagon Qowarban vendy vendy.

(When Pir steps in the dwelling of his Murid,
The latter expresses pleasure, as if the Makhdoom himself visited his house.
All young and old assemble and sit around the pir in civility,
Some press his feet, while some remove the dirt from his face.
People present touch the feet of the Pir,
and rub their faces with Pirs clothes.
What wrong we had committed, which delayed your auspicious visit,
Then all the family members sit around the pir.
People present reaffirm their faith in the spiritual powers of the pir).

To quote Ishaq Khan,

> *"When small pox attacked children, Muslims would usually call their pirs and pandits would perform some regular ceremonies"*,[78].

Khatm-Khwani

In complete uniformity with the Hindu tradition of reciting mantras or 'Shaluks' to avoid any unforeseen damage or disaster, the Muslims adopted a practice according to which the Imam of the local mosque, family Pir and family elders conversant with the Quran were invited to recite *Naat, Manqabat* and Sufi

treatises for the safety and the security of the family members from the disastrous effects of the natural calamities and other troubles. This unique practice was known[79] as Khatm-i-Sharief.

The evidences suggest that the childless parents also held special sittings, where in the verses of the Quran and other sufi treatises were recited to invoke the aid of the sanctified souls. It is said that during the time of Maharaja Hari Singh (1926-1947) the Maharaja arranged for *Khatm-khwani* under the supervision of *Hassan Shah Bandey* (mutwali of the Ziarat of Dargah) for the birth of a son. the participants in the *Khatm-khwani* were served with *wazwan* and were paid one to two rupees each[80].

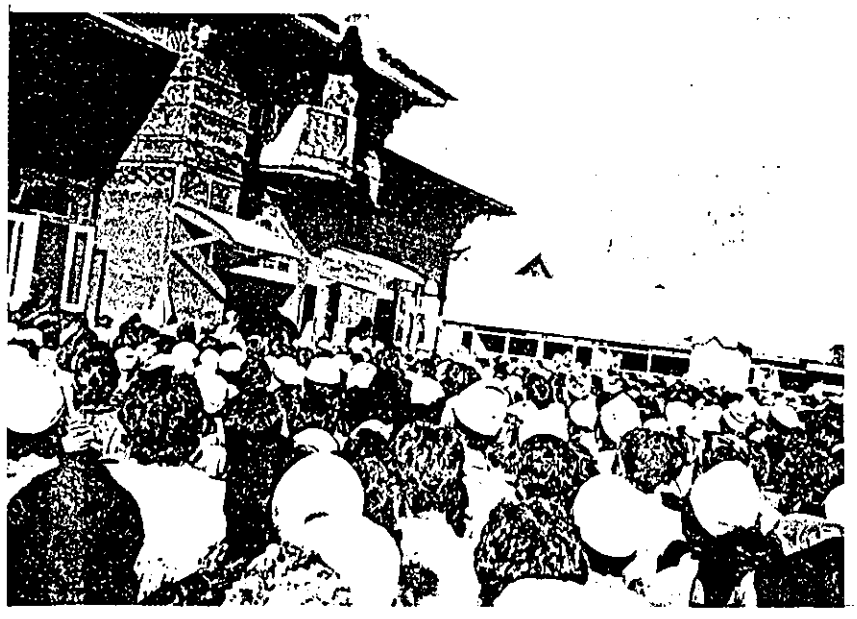
Some times the practice of arranging Khatam-i-Sharief was done with the purpose of making offering to the dead. The practice looked more akin to the Hindu practice of *Sharad*, which the Hindus practised with the intention of making offerings to the dead souls of their deceased family members.

Relic Worship

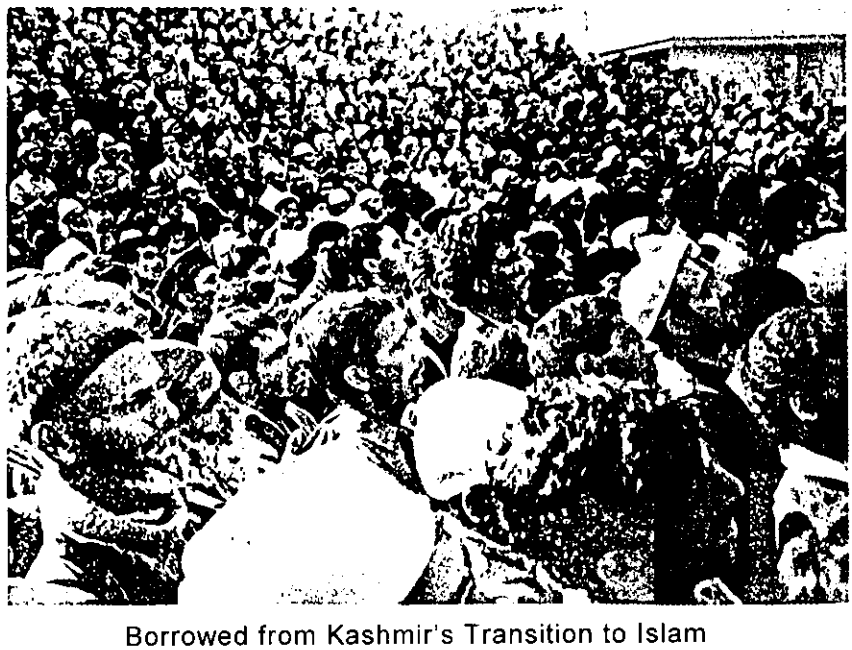
Grounded in tradition, people, inspite of entering into the fold ofIslam, carried some of their ancestral religious traits.(no doubt with new Islamic orientation). We find expression of one such predominant trait in the form of relic worship in Kashmir. Kashmir, which once had served as one of the important centres of Buddhist learning upheld the tradition of preserving the relics, which immediately started after the death of Buddha among his followers[81]. In India, and the neighbouring countries many stupas were raised where the relics of Lord Buddha were enshrined for the devotees to adore[82]. The relic worship does not fall in line with the normative Islam[83]. It constitutes as one of the major elements of folk religion in Kashmir. Hardly there be

any shrine in Kashmir which do not house either a relic of the saint burried there or the relic of some other celebrated sufi saint. The relic worship in new Islamic colour started in Kashmir when Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, who is known in Kashmir as *Bani-e-Islam* (founder of Islam in Kashmir) brought with him two relics of Holy prophet (P.B.U.H). these were, *'Tent-pole'* and 'Standard'.[84] These relics are housed in Shah Hamdan mosque and during the period of our study, these relics were exhibited secretly during the night hours to word off the evil effects of the natural calamities. In an acute situation of crises caused by recurring floods, famines, earthquakes, these relics were carried in a procession to the shrine of Shaikh Nur-ud-din at Tsrar, where these were exhibited before the general public[85].

In complete divorce to the Arab tradition, where the relics of the prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) were considered to be some sort of amulets collected and kept for private use, in Kashmir these relics are housed in shrines or in mosques[86]. These relics mostly in the form of *Khirqa* (cloth) *dastar* (Turban) a *aas-i-sharief* (cane) *khrav* (cloak) *alam* (tent pole) *moe-mubarak* (holy hair) were and still are displayed mostly on the occasions of *'Urs'* for the spritio-religious nourishment of the devotees,[87] who thronged into shrines in a large number. The public exhibition of these relics would also speak of the assimilation of the local Hindu-Buddhist practices in the popular Islam of Kashmir. It is not also to be wondered at, therefore, that a mere sight of the relics at cougragations especially on the eve of Urs, cause the devotees to recite litanies and *munāgāt* in chorus. A special characteristic of the Kashmiri Muslim social behaviour at such gatherings is the focus on the object of veneration with folded hands,[88] which undoubtedly suggests local influences on their



Pilgrims at the shrine of Nuruddin in Chrar-i-Shariff looking reverentially at the relics of the Rishia being exhibited on the eve of his anniversary. See Figs. 2(b c) also.



Borrowed from Kashmir's Transition to Islam

Folk dancers at the shrine of Baba Nasibuddin Ghazi.

Pilgrims with their offerings at the shrine of Baba Rishi.

Borrowed from Kashmir's Transition to Islam

mode of prayer. The following folk song shows the eagerness of the folk to have the glimpse of the relics enshrined in different shrines of the valley.

Nabi sund tarvei dedār karevei dedār karevei[89]
Darūd parevei darūd perveie dedār karevei
Dastgīr sebun tarevei dedār kaevei dedār karevie
Qurān teti parvei Quran teti perevei dedār karivea
Khānqah gethvei dedār kavvei, dedār karvei
Aurād parvei Aurad parevie, dedar karvei
Tsar kun kethvei dedār karvei dedār karvei
Dashi teti gandevei dedār karvi dedār karvei
Zēn shah seben kethvei dedār karevi dedār karvei
Gowaphi teti ethvei gowaphi teti ethvei
Dedār karvei dedar karvei

(Let us throng to the shrine of Hazratbal
We will have the glimpse of the holy hair of the prophet there, while seeing the relic, we will sing songs in praise of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H).
Let us visit to the shrine of Dastagir Sahab
We will have the glimpse of saints relic
While seeing the relic, we will recite the verses of the holy Quran.
Let us rush to the shrine of Khanqah-i-Moula
we will have the glimpse of the saints relics there
While looking at the relic, we will recite 'aurad' there.
Let us flock to the shrine of Shrine of Sheikh Nur-ud-din at tsrar.
We will have the glimpse of saints relics there, we will use the occasion for untying the rags, tied their earlier.
Let us move to the shrine of Zaina-ud-din we will have the glimpse of the saints relic there
Let us avail the opportunity of entering into the cave of the saint).

Naful And Animal Sacrifice

The persistence of ancient beliefs in folk religion is well exemplified by the collective exhibition of 'Naful' custom, which attained highest application during our period of study- mainly due to the devastating natural calamities that occurred quite frequently in Kashmir. According to the practice, people in the valley, in times of

natural calamities like famine, drought, flood, earthquake, fire, and plague organised special prayer processions and gatherings most particularly at *Idgah*, Srinagar, *Tsarl-Sharief, Khanqah-i-Moula* and at the Ziarat of Pir-Makhdoom sahab[89a]. In these Special semi-religious gatherings, people would confer their sins and invoke the aid of all saintly souls to convey their genuine sufferings in the realm of Almighty "Allah" People believed that these catastrophes were the products of their own sins, hence, unless the aid of the cultivated saint was not sought, there seemed no end in sight from the disastrous effects of these calamities. As per the literary records, people moved in big processions, carrying with them in most auspicious way the relics enshrined in different shrines, to the spot selected for mass prayers. After offering special prayers, relics were generally exhibited before the faithful. This immediately fallowed by loud weeping and Sobbing of the folk.

In a state where there was no provision to redress the distress of the masses, people had no other option in sight, but to initiate a devise which according to the tradition, provided them a chance to express their helplessness before the supreme creator. If we judge the practice in the light of then prevailing socio-political scenario, a researcher had no hesitation in holding that it was the highest type of mass protest against the inability and the callous attitude of the authorities, who inspite of being witness to the appealing heights of misery and pain, could do nothing concrete to relieve the Sufferings of the people[90]. With no scheme of public Welfare in sight, people developed this scheme of socio-religions pathology which to them involved less degree of official warth and oppression. History bear ample evidence to the fact that who so ever during the period under review cultivated the courage to convey the

grievances to the authorities met with a severe fate[91]. According to the records available, people demonstrated great interest in these exercises and same could be gleaned from these lines of a folk song.

Īdgah terevei noflā pervei[92]
Aāgas mangevei nofla pervei.
Chrūthi shrani gethvei noflā pervei
Imdād mangavei nofla pervei
yeti pethi tervei, Alama tulevei
Tāpah teti Mangevei nofla parvei
Rut teti mangavei, dādyen mangvei
Idgah terevei nofla pervei.

(Let us proceed to Idgah to offer 'Naful' prayer,
We will present the petition of our woes there before the Almighty God.
Maintaining full sanctity, we will press our heads down on the ground in the audience of Allah.
Let us carry the sacred relic in procession to the Idgah ground,
while offering 'nafal' we will seek end to the torrential rains and clouds,
It is there, that we prey for the health of the sick and ailing,
Let us move to the Idgah for offering Naful prayer).

From the content of the song referred to above, it looks plausible to hold that amid extreme state of misery and helplessness and disillusioned at the rapacious and inhuman behaviour of the authorities and their official subordinates, people often sought refuge in the sanctuaries of the saints or in the open audience of God for seeking redresse to their sufferings and sorrows.

In addition to this Kashmiris had belief in offering animal sacrifice for keeping away evil eyes and to ward off any unforeseen ugly occurance.

Not only in the distant past but the tradition continues, though with less intensity that when ever an average Kashmiri finds himself or any other family member in trouble, the folk expression *"Amis theviv Zuvas Zū "* out rightly comes on

his lips. At this hour of family trouble either a goat or a ram is sacrificed and the meat of the sacrificial is distributed raw among the people near by. In order to gain fertility, women folk hurriedly rush to the shrine of *Baba Payam-ud-din* at *Baba Rish* near picturesque Gulmarg and besides offering the animal gift, the childless ladies plaster the mud *dan* (stove) there with the hope that they become mothers in the near future. There is yet another folk saying in circulation *"Thepi thepi Kath karon"*. This also stands for the instant sacrifice of a sheep in an hour of trouble for avoiding any bad occurance to happen.

Superstitions And Folk Beliefs

Another folk trait observable in the collective religious behaviour of Kashmiris was their belief in the so-called mystic merit of the *shodas*[93] (chares consumers). The elderly *shodas* were kept in high profile by the common folk for their sincerity, straight forwardness and unstained expositions. It was a popular belief that the prayers of shodas never go unheard and resultless in the realm of God. Therefore, in order to please them, it had become customary to send a portion of Kashmiri *wazwan* at the *shoda taki*[94] for the use of shodas. Unlike *'Bhande doikher, shode doikher*[95] was considered more effective and result oriented. But the institution degenerated with the passage of time and the faqirs, mendicants and social parasites sought admission in these centres which made them the focus of public indignation. The eminent poet of 19th century Maqbool Kralwari ridicules the degradation of the institution in this verse.

Charas tei bhange cheth yus nange pherī[96]
Karan tas petch depen yī gei fekīrī

(A person who resorts to aimless wandering after taking a smoke of charas is believed to be the true mediator to God)

Average Kashmiris strict adherence to variety of superstitions dates back to the earliest time. Rooted in the collective folk psyche, it stood firmly against any religious changeover that Kashmir experienced at various intenvals of its history. No doubt, at the dawn of the present century, efforts were made to eradicate an average Kashmiri's belief in superstitions as these were dubbed as irrational, irreligious and Unscientific. But its deep imprints on the canvas of Kashmiri psyche could not be erased altogether. Its continuance in the new scheme of religious orientation, was further necessitated by the selfish Muslim religious class known as 'Pirs' who found in this un Islamic practice a ready made source for their sustenance. Commenting on identical traits of popular Islam and Hindu Brahminism, Ishaq Khan remarks, "It would be very difficult in certain cases to make[97] a difference between a Hindu and the Muslim. One such striking similarity is observed in the practice according to which both Hindus and the Muslims keep the natural springs in high veneration[98]. During my field survey I had an occasion to observe some elderly Muslim women pouring milk and unhusked rice in the spring at *Zewan* Khrew. While replying to my series of questions, these ladies expressed that we had heard from the elders that the seed of the saffron was first traced out in the spring, hence we believe it our moral duty to keep the spring in high veneration. By pouring milk and unhusked rice, we expect rich harvest in the future.

A related theme addressed as earlier, has been quoted by Gh.Nabi Khanyari in his Wajeez-ul-Tawarikh. According to lore in Devsar paragana there was a spring

called 'Pahhu' who soever was willing to know the prospects of his future, filled an earthen vessel with boiled rice and closed its mouth having written his name on its top and threw it into the spring. After lapse of one year, on the specific day if the rice was found fragrant and warm, far, the year was considered to be prosperous, but if it was filled with clay or mud, it was considered as a sign of bad omen[99].

Living in the environ of ignorance and illiteracy, Kashmiris generally attributed the out break of epidemics to the displeasure of supernatural objects than seeking its origin in the uncongenial and unhygienic physical surrounding. Therefore, different diseases ware associated with different deities and folk characters, like *Shutely Bed, Howlhej Bed, Musil Bed,*[100] etc. In order to be relieved of the fatal ailments like cholera, small pox and other water born disease, special meals were prepared as an offerings for these supernatural characters referred to above.

In the similar manner, when people developed certain kinds of dermetological diseases they, instead, of seeking advice from Hakims would go to certain selected spots, and rubbed the affected organs of their bodies, with mud.

Our Kashmiri folk literature is replete with the references which indicate that not to talk of the celebrated saints, ignorant people even sought the services of beggars, mendicants, Hindu yogi and Faqirs for the redressel of their material losses. A Kashmiri proverb

Mety sund dop gō balayān thop[101]

(An utterance of an insane is enough to
lessen the affects of Gods wrath)

Like Kashmiri Pandits, Muslims of Kashmir also recognised some signs for supposed good and some signs for supposed bad. For example both Muslims and Hindus even today treat the continuous barking of dog as a bad omen. In a similar fashion an owl sitting during day at the roof edge was considered as a bad omen. Both solar and lunar eclipses were taken as a sign of any unforeseen trouble or misfortune[102]. A Kashmiri proverb

"Brer phengeny" (purring of cat) } stands for unforeseen trouble or discomfort.

During the chilly winter nights, when abundance of snowfall parlayed the entire village life in Kashmir, people living near dense forests with variety of wild animals developed a kind of fear – psychosis, which forced the people to believe in the existence of ghastly super natural characters like, *veivoph,*[103] *Bram Bram Chowak, Rants, Dens, Yetch,* and others of like nature. We very frequently come across such characters in scores of our folk storys.

In the footsteps of their Pandit brethre, Kashmiri Muslims treated certain numerals like 3,13,23 as inauspicious. Untill very recently no social function was conducted on these dates of Christian or Muslim calender. Muslims also did not effect their marriage contracts during the months of *'safar'* and *'Muharam'*.

Kashmiri Pandits whose socio-religious behaviour is generally regulated and governed by the text of the *'Nilmat Puran'* were and still continue to be the firm believers of superstition, witchcraft and other supernatural beliefs. For example the sneezing in the beginning of the work was and is considered inauspicious. Against this proposition, sneezing at the time of going to bed, the chanse sight of cow,seing a

child or a curd while leaving for work were considered auspicious. The vision of transparent water, cooked rice, breads and grapes were believed to augment good luck. Dreaming of copper coins, eating of walnuts were considered signs of sad event in future[104].

Inspite of different popular traits, seen in the collective religious behaviour of Kashmiri Muslims, one can not altogether ignore an average Kashmiri Muslim's faith in the fundamentals of Islam as revealed in the Holy Quran. They firmly believe in the concept of unity of God, The Quran, final book of revelation, the finality of Prophethood and the day of the Judgement.

The impressions we come across in the day today religious behaviour of Kashmiri Muslims in fact, constitute the popular cultural traits, which the neo-Muslims retained in a broader Islamic frame work in the beginning of the 14th century[105]. The leaders of Alh-i-Hadith [106] movement, inspite of their vehement criticism, failed to convince the Muslims about the futility of the popular practices. The followers of the movement failed to understand that these popular shade of the religion is always fashioned by the cultural heritage of the people and the their emotional attachment to some of the customs should be judged more from a socio-cultural prism rather than the principles of the elite religion.

A careful study of Kashmiri folk poetry reveal that Kashmiri Muslims strictly believe in the fundamentals of Islam and the same is expressed in the number of folk songs. Not to talk of religious exercises even recreational pursuits like *Wanvun* and *Rov* are initiated with the words in praise of God

Bismillah kerith hemevei venevuneye,
Sahiban anjam onuyey.
Az hei cham Hazrati Haq senz yerī,

Peri chenis Iqbales.
Khanemej kyazi chak harenī,
Sag di haqi subheniye,

(We start the wanvun with the name of God-the most merciful and beneficent)
Let God guide us to the enlightened destiny)
I can not express my thanks for the bounties of God with the help of God, I am destined to good luck.
Why are you weeping my sole daughter?
Have a courage, God is at your back.

The Hindus of the valley generally known as Kashmiri Pandits are the strict followers of ritualistic Brahminism. Their religious behaviour is regulated by ceremonial prepositions embodied in the earliest extant socio-religious document popularly known as *'Nilmat Puran'*.

Groomed in the mystic surrounding of Kashmir, the Pandits of Kashmir had always been bewitched by every fascinating natural object. Hence, they cultivated a religious behaviour, according to which every national object including the entire land of Kashmir possessed religious merit. This belief of Kashmiri Pandits has been recognised by Muslim scholars and historians who had a chance to visit Kashmir. According to the author of '*Ayeen-i-Akbari*': "The Hindus regard all Kashmir as holy land. Forty five places are dedicated to *"Mahadev"* and sixty four to *'Bishu'*, three to *"Brahma"* and twenty two to *"Durga"*. In seven hundred places there are carved figures of snakes, which they worship[107]. Vigne is of the opinion that there were five principal deities which were worshipped by the Hindus, these were *'Shiva'*, *"Surya"*,

"Ganapati", *'Bhawani'* and *'Vishnu'*. The votaries of Shiva were more numerous than those of the rest put together[108].

The votaries or Bhagats of Shiv were distinguished by the horizontal mark of *Kessar* on their forehead whereas the votaries of Vishnu marked their forehead vertically.

Kashmiri Pandits, as is evident from their religious application, may be termed mostly as Shiv devotes. Whatever might have been the origin of Shivism in Kashmir, there is no doubt that Shiva as a popular deity was widely worshipped (as it is even at present) from a remote period[109]. There were number of Shiv temples, where the image of the Shiv was adored by the devotees and the *'Lingam'* worshipped.

The cult of Vishnu also existed in the valley from a very early period. With the accession of Karkotas to the throne of Kashmir in 7th century A.D., Vishnu, the adorned deity of the family, came to occupy a prominent position in the Kashmir pantheon[110].

In addition to Shiva and Vishnu, there are many other minor Hindu gods and goddesses whom the Kashmiri Pandits worshipped. These include *Ganisha, Surya, Agni, Lakshmi, Durga* etc.[111]. Ganisha was, one of the popular gods of the valley of Kashmir worship of *'Shakti'*, was also widely prevalent. In the worship of goddess Durga, who is considered to be an embodiment of Shakti, animal sacrifice played an important part. Goddess 'Sharda' was one of the most celebrated dities of the valley. She was nothing but Shakti embodying three manifestations. All these gods and

goddesses mentioned above are still worshipped by the Hindus of Kashmir with complete faith and devotion.

The goddess *'Ragniya'*[112] whose temple is situated at Tulmul, Ganderbal, is held in high veneration by the Kashmiri Pandits. They abstain from taking meat on the day of their visit to the temple. To appease the goddess 'Ragnia' milk, sugar and rice is thrown into the spring as offerings[113].

The goddess 'Shitla Mata' was invoked when some one was attacked by small-pox. The offering of sheep, goats silver and gold was made to get rid of this deadly disease. Sharika Devi, another local deity was also regard as very sacred by the Hindus of Kashmir. Untill very recently Kashmiri Pandits flocked every morning to the temple to have the blessings of the goddess.

Hindu worship was not confined to the propitiation of gods and demigods only; great and holy men were also reverenced both during their lives and long after their death. Some Muslim saints like *Nur-ud-Din, Dastagir Sahab, Baba Payam-ud-Din, Baba Zaina-ud-Din, Batmalloo Sahib* were not only held in high esteem but their shrines were visited on certain days by Kashmiri Pandits.

The Mahatmya literature embodied in various Hindu Puranas bear evidence to the fact that Hindus from the remotest times attached great importance to the pilgrimage of the religious sites. In Kashmir, there are number of places, which are attended by pilgrims not only from Kashmir but from the different parts of India. The prominent among them are *Amarnath Cave*[114], *Gangabal Lake*[115], *Mattan*[116] and others.

In order to possess the religious merit, Kashmiri Pandits selected certain spots in the valley as substitutes for Ganga and other sacred places situated in different parts of northern India. On these selected spots, Kashmiri Pandits performed certain death ceremonies of their deceased family members[117].

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2. Mohib-ul-Hassan, ***Kashmir Under the Sultans***, pp.34-39.

3. Baba Nasib, Op.Cit., f.205(a), See also Mohib-ul-Hassan, Op.Cit., p.56. ***Fatuhat-i-Kubravi***, f.1470(a). ***Bharistan-i-Shahi***, f.21(a). Srivara, Op.cit., p.142.

4. Hassan, Op.Cit., pp.221-222.

5. **Ibid.**

6. S. L. Shali, ***Kashmir History and Archeology Through the Ages***, p.79.

7. Bulbul Shah was the first Sufi saint who arrived in Kashmir and took his abode at Aali Kadal on the right bank of the river vitasta. His original name was Syed Sharaf-ud-Din. He was a Musavi Sayyid from Turkistan. He came to Kashmir in the reign of King Suhedeva (1301-20). He is said to have played his role in the conversion of Rinchana to Islam. For his oratory skill, he was given the title of Bulbul Shah Baba Daud Miskati, *Asrar-ul-Abrar*, f.45(a), Muhammad Azam Diddamari, *Waqiat-i-Kashmiri*, p.30.

8. Ishaq Khan, ***Kashmirs Transition to Islam***, p.24. "Islam did not cause abysmal destruction to ancient Kashmiri culture, but guided the course of its development in such a manner that it eventually emerged out of the narrow waters of Brahminism into the broad sea of Islamic humanism".

9. G. M. D. Sufi, ***Kasheer***, p.89. ***Islamic Culture in Kashmir***, p.122.

10. Farooq Fayaz, *Cultural Perspective of Kashmir Identity*, Published in the Kashmir Times, 1998. For elaborate description see Ishaq Khan, Op.Cit., p.47.

11. A celebrated Kashmiri poetess of fourteenth century Kashmir. She fought vehementally against Brahminical orthodoxy and is acknowledged as one of the distinguished champions of Kashmiris Religio-cultural identity. For details see - J. L. Koul ***Lal Ded***. Cultural Academy.

12. Famous Kashmiri' Saint and poet who was born towards the close of 14th century near village Qaimoh of Tehsil Kulgam. He wa a founder of indigenous ***'Rishi'*** mystic order of Kashmir. ***Kuliyat-i-Sheikh-ul-alam***, (Ed.) M.L. Saqi,

pp.1-70. Kamil, ***Noor nama***, Unity and Diversity (Eng) cultural Academy. Gowhar, G. N. ***Noor-i-Irfan***. Introduction. Sheikh-ul-Alam and His Times (Kash) Shafi Shauq, *Sheikh-ul-Alam and His Times*, Publications of Dean Students Welfare Office, University of Kashmir, *Sheikh-ul-Alam*, ***'Anhar'***, and ***'Sheeraza'*** Special Numbers; *Sheikh-ul-Alam-Ek.* Mutala, M.Asad-ulah. pp. 27-28

13. Within the fold of Islam, it was a movement of local mystics. Sheikh Nur-ud-Din was the founder of this indigenous order of Muslim mystics. (Rishi Silsila) Kashmir is said to have been the abode of 'Rishis' long before the advent of Islam and this won for Kashmir the title of *'Reshy Wer'* or *'Rishi Vatika'*. For full details see unpublished Ph.D. thesis of Rashid Nazki, The Historical Background of Rishi Movement. Ishaq Khan, Op.Cit., pp.37-53; *Shik-ul-Alam*, Ek. Mutla, As. M.Asad-ullah. pp. 27-28

14. ***Keshir Luka Beth*** (Ed. Moti Lal Saqi), Vol.IV, pp.47, 63, 74, 103, 105, Vol.V., pp.15, 31, 43, 54.... , Vol.VIII, (Ed. Sham Lal Pardesi and Somnath Sadhu.

15. Ishaq Khan, Op.Cit., p.24.

16. Mohib-ul-Hassan, Op.Cit., p.24.

17. Parimoo, ***A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir***, p.34.

18. Quoted by Tickoo, ***Story of Kashmir***, p.267.

19. Robert Redfield, ***Peasant Society and Culture***, p.72. See also "Popular Customs and Monotheistic Religions in the Middle East and North Africa, (Ed. A. Fodor and A Shvtiel), pp.37-39.

20. Luckman, T. ***The Invisible Religion***, p.158.

21. **Ibid.**, 158.

22. Smelser, Neil, J. ***Theory of Collective Behaviour***, pp.42-44.

23. Glock, C. Y. and Stark, ***Religion and Society in Tension***, p.127.

24. **Ibid.**, p.217.

25. J. M. Yinger, ***The Science of Religion***, p.92.

26. ***Al-Quran,*** Sura Al-Haj, Ayat-73.

27. It is an invocatory prayer compiled by Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani. It is recited aloud in chorus by the faithful immediately after the morning prayers.

28. Ishaq Khan, Op.Cit., p.68.

29. **Ibid.**, p.68.

30. **Ibid.**, p.4.

31. Srivara, ***Rajtarangni***, p.235.

32. Farooq Fayaz, *Cultural Perspective of Kashmir Identity.*

33. This folk song was revealed to me by a lady from Zaina Kadal locality of Srinagar. Her name was Moghli. She was introduced to me by Nissar Ahmad, a cloth merchant in Gada Kocha, Zaina Kadal, Srinagar.

34. Stein, ***Rajtarangni,*** Introduction, Vol.I, p.130.

35. Lawrence, ***The Valley of Kashmir***, p.160.

36. Robert Thorp, ***Kashmir Misgovernment***, p.87.

37. M. Y. Teng; Introduction to ***'Sheeraza'*** Sheikh-ul-Alam Number, Culture Academy, p.3.

38. Unpublished folk song, Collected from Raja Banoo of Awantipora village some twenty nine kilometers from Srinagar on the Jammu Srinagar National Highway.

39. Ignaz Godzihar, ***Muslim Studies***, Vol.II, London, pp.271-77.

40. **Ibid.**, p.280.

41. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Popularly known as Amir-i-Kabir or Shah-i-Hamdan was one of the most remarkable personalities of the 14th century Muslim World. He hailed from Hamadan and played a significant role in bringing the Kashmiri Hindus under the fold of Islam. For details see Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani - Life and Works, Mufti Maqbool.

42. The shrine of the saint is at Tsrar. For upholding the cause of the down trodden, the saint has been given the title of 'Alamdar'. See also, ***Kashmiri Zuban Aur Shairi***, Ab. Ahad Azad, p.199. ***Keshiri Adbuk Twarikh***, A. K. Rehber, p.170.

43. Baba Rishi is the popular name of Baba Payam-ud-Din. He was one of the disciples of Sheikh Zain-ul-Din. He is reported to have belonged to a rich family and is said to have severed all worldly relations and turned a faqir. The saint died in 1475 A.D. at Ranbuah ***Tarikh-i-Hassan***, Vol.III, p.112.

44. Zia Singh, after his conversion to Islam came to be known as Zain-ud-Din. He held an important position among the disciples of Nur-ud-Din. His shrine at Aishamuqam on the road to Pahalgam is held in high veneration by the rural folk. According to Lawrence, the shrine is much respected by the boatmen of Kashmir, who take their children (there) and cut off their first lock of hair. If this

was done else where, the child would die or became blind." Walter Lawrence, ***The Valley of Kashmir***, p.288.

45. Lawrence, Op.cit., pp.285-286. M. I. Khan, Op.Cit., p.105.

46. Ibid., Ghulam Hassan Mir, ***Muslim Shrines of Kashmir***, p.61, D.c. Sharma, Kashmir Under the Sikhs, p.85.

47. Unpublished folk song, I collected it from Abdul Khaliq Thukroo of Ramnagar Shupian - a village near famous Ahrabal Fall.

48. A. Fodor, A Shivtiel, Op.cit., p.37.

49. W. Lawrence, Op.cit., pp.285-286.

50. Ibid., Ghulam Hassan Mir, Op.Cit., p.61.

51. Saqi, ***Keshir Luka Beth***, Vol.III, p.164.

52. E. F. Neve, ***Thirty Years in Kashmir***, p.117. Sharma, Bakshi, ***Kashmir Society and Culture***, (Ed.), p.53.

53. B. A. Khan, *Ahl-i-Hadith Attitude vis-a-vis Shrines*, Paper presented in K.F.A.C. Seminar.

54. Three Shrines of prominent Rishi Saints namely Sheikh Nur-ud-Din, Baba Payam-ud-Din and Baba Bam-ud-Din.

55. Ishaq Khan, Op.cit., p.43.

56. M. L. Saqi, ***Keshir Luka Beith*** (Kashmiri Folk Songs) Vol.VI, pp.47, 63, 74, 82; Vol.V, pp.15, 37, 43, 51.

57. Michael Winter, ***Popular Religion in Egypt***, p.106.

58. M. Y. Teing, ***Kuliyat-i-Maqbool***, (Kas) Ghazal section, J & K cultural Academy.

59. ***Tarikh-i-Hassan***, Vol.I, P.442.

60. G. N. Aatish, ***Keshir Luke Beth*** (Kashmiri Folk Songs), Vol.2. p.17, 21, 51.

61. Such manqabats are recited by devotees in groups on annual 'Urs' days at the shrine of Makhdoom Sahib. Since the song does not bear the name of its poet, I included it in the domain of folk literature. The literary piece is not published in any of the Kashmiri literary history.

62. G. N. Aatish, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.7, 19.181, Cultural Academy.

63. The shrine of Hazratbal excells all shrines in merit. The ***'Dargah'*** houses the sacred hair of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Kashmiris refer to it by various titles such as *Aasar-i-Sahrief, Madinat-ul-Sani, Dargah Sharief* etc. The shrine is some ten kilometers away from Lal Chowk on the Western shore of famous Dal Lake. For details see *Keshur Encyclopedia*, p.13. *Tariekh-i-Hasan*, pp.91-92. *Muslim Shrines of Kashmir*, G. H. Mir.

64. Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom was one of the leading mystics of Kashmir who wielded great influence on the masses. The shrine stands on the picturesque hillock 'Hari Parbat', some six kilometers away from Lal Chowk. For details see A. Rafiqi, ***Sufism in Kashmir***, pp.21-22. ***Keshur Encyclopedia***, p.215, ***Special Kashmir Today***, p. 154.

65. The Shrine of ***Pir Dastagir***, which stands at Khanyar Srinagar contains the holy relic (hair) of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jeelani, the founder and the great saint of Qadir! order. Pir means mentor and ***'dastagir'*** means the person who holds the hands or supports the supplicant. The saint never visited Kashmir but his scholarly and spiritual merit brought him so much of reputation that people of all countries and communities came to hold him in high esteem. For details see ***Tarikh-i-Kabir, Mis keen Mohi-ud-Din. Khilasat-ul-Tawerikh,*** (Urdu), Mirza Saif-ud-Din ***Keshir Encyclopedia***, p.169.

66. Khanqah-i-Moula is situated in Srinagar on the right bank of river Jehlum between Fateh Kadal and Zaina Kadal. The shrine is named after the renowned mystic saint, scholar, poet, theologian and author, Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Popularly known as Shah-i-Hamadan or Amir-i-Kabir. Mohib-ul-Hassan, ***Kashmir Under the Sultains,*** p.55. ***Tariekh-i-Hassan,*** Vol.III, p.488. ***Tariekh-i-Kabir***, Miskeen Mohi-ud-Din, p.178.

67. Custodians of the shrines who were entitled to the part of the shrine offerings.

68. W. Lawrence, Op.Cit., pp.289-90.

69. Biscoe, ***Kashmir in Sun Light and Shade***, p.107.

70. Dr. B. A. Khan, Op.Cit., M. I. Khan, ***History of Srinagar***, (1846-1947).

71. G. N. Aatish, Op.Cit., pp.92, 108, 181, 201.

72. Knowls, J. H. ***Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings***, p.99. G. N. Nazir, ***Keshir Depety*** (Kas) ***Kashmiri Sayings***, p.97. Earnest, F. Nere, ***The People***, Published in ***Kashmiri Society and Culture*** (Ed.) p.57.

73. Maqbool, though himself a 'Pir' exposed the professional mechanations of the 'Pir' class. M.Y. Teng (Ed.) ***Kulyat-i-Maqbool***, Cultural Academy, Introduction. A. A. Azad, Op.Cit., p.199.

74. Teng; Op.Cit., p.136.

75. Moulana Anwar Shah Shupiani, ***Basharat-ul-Momineen***, Reprint, pp.17-19. M. I. Khan, Op.Cit., pp.105-106.

76. S. N. Dhar, ***Folk Tales of Kashmir***, Introduction, Also see Page No's. 21, 75, 89.

77. M. Y. Teng, Op.Cit., p.137.

78. M. I. Khan, Op.Cit., pp.105-106.

79. A special religious gathering in which the services of the pirs, Mujawirs and the local imam are sought to recite the ayats of the Holy Quran, Naats, Manaqabats and the extracts of the mystic texts. After the completion of the exercise the participants are fed with sumptous feat and are also pleased with some cash payments. The audience is generally organised to prey for the everlasting peace of a deceased family member. The exercise is also conducted to ward of the evil effects of any bad occurrence.

80. G. H. Mir, Op.Cit., p.70.

81. Sir, M. Monier Williams, *Bhuddism in its conexion with Brahminism and Hinduism*, p.173.

82. Malley, O. ***Modern India and the West London***, Oxford, Oxford University press, p.39.

83. Goldziher, Op.Cit., pp.287-297.

84. Khan, G. H. ***The Kashmiri Musalmans***, p.122.

85. G. Nabi Khanyari, ***Wajeez-ul-Tawarikh***, f.66(b).

86. Goldziher, Op.Cit., p.295.

87. Gh. Hassan Mir, Op.Cit., p.65.

88. Christian, W. Troll; ***Muslim shrines in India***, (Ed.) An article by M. I. Khan 'The Significance of the Dargah of Hazratbal in the religious and Political Life of Kashmiri Muslims, Delhi, 1992, p.175. Also M. I. Khan, Kashmiris Transition to Islam, p.182.

89. Unpublished folk song collected from Ab. Khaliq of Beerwah.

89(a) Since the period umder reference experienced a recuring roll of natural calamities in the form of earthquakes, floods, famines and epidemics like cholera, small-pox etc. etc. the people of the valley instead of seeking solutions

approached the shrines for riddance from natural calamities. The practice of visiting the religious place on such occasions led Lawrence to state that "religion of Islam is too abstract to satisfy their superstitious cravings and they turn from the mean priest and the mean mosque to the pretty shrine of carved wood". Whenever there was a failure of rain, people visited Makhdoom Sahib's shrine in processions from all parts of the valley. The main feature of the practice was for the people to carry earthen pitches and pails filled with water which they poured into the pond near the shrine. For details see, Khanyari, ***Wajeez-ut-Tawarikh***, f.66(b), f.616. Lawrence, Op.Cit., ***Kashmiri Handbook***, p.288. Duke, p.123.

90. Farooq Fayaz, Social Protest as reflected in Kashmir Bhande Pether. Paper published in 'Anhar' Research Journal of Kashmiri Department, Kashmir University, 1998.

91. On one such occasion, when people of Bandipora attempted to place their grievances before the authorities, it is said that the leaders of the procession were drowned alive in the Wulur Lake. See P. N. Bazaz, ***Inside Kashmir, Kashmiris Struggle for Freedom***, p.202.

92. Unpublished folk song sung for me by Khateeja of Tujr village from the Baramullah district of Kashmir.

93. A close review of the institution suggest that it was more an escapist occupation than a daring trail to protest against the oppressive practices of the sikh and Dogra officialdom. By resorting to ***charas*** or opium consuming exercises these people thought themselves as relieved and freed from the strains and the stresses caused by the tyrannous treatment of the officials and the clutches of extreme poverty.

94. In Srinagar city during the period of our study, there existed number of *Shoda Takias*. Few prominent among these were the ***'Takia'*** at Shora Khan Gaw Kadal, Fetchkadal and Nowhatta. People addicted to 'Bhang' and 'Charas' would sit there idly for hours together and shared the smoke in a systematic way. This information was given to me by one Khazir Muhammad of Bagwanpora Sathu, who himself happened to be the regular visitor to the Shoda Takia of Gaw Kadal.

95. The collective prayers of these shodas was considered more effective than the prayers of folk actors like ***'Bhands'***. During the course of their folk performances, ***'Bhands'*** often stretched their hands up and sought the blessings of God for the audience around. This gesture of 'Bhands' was taken as a trade trick by the spectators to grab money from the people. Unlike this, ***Shoda***

doikter (prayers made by shodas) was accepted pure and thus people believed that these prayers of shodas would not go unheard in the realm of God.

96. Maqbool Kralwari, ***Kulyat-i-Maqbool***, (Ed.) Teng, p.132.

97. Ishaq Khan, Op.Cit., p.105.

98. Fish cultured in natural springs are not taken both by the Hindus and the Muslims. This is also conveyed through this Kashmiri proverb:

    Nage gade chi wetchi halal te kheni haram.

    (A fish from the spring is only an object to see at. It is sinful to taste them).

    In vernacular the spring is known as 'Nag' and Kashmiris veneration of the springs had been attributed to the Naga worship, which once formed the major religious belief in Kashmir. See for detail W. crook, *popular Religion in Northern India.* ***Rajtarangni,*** (Stein) Tr. Introduction. ***Nitmat Purana*** (Tr.) Ved Kumari Ghai, vol.I, (Religious beliefs).

99. G. N. Khanyari, Op.Cit., f.10(b), 11(a).

100. People believed that the epidemics were caused due to the displeasure of some deities or folk characters. In order to please them and to avoid the fatal consequences of the epidemics like cholera, small-pox, and others of like nature, people observed number of ceremonies.

101. G. N. Nazir, ***Keshir Depety*** (Kashmiri Folk songs), p.111, Knowles, Op.Cit., pp.51, 87, 102. S. N. Dhar, Folk Tales of Kashmir, pp.11, 25, 29, 51.

102. Census of India, 1961, Village Survey Report of Mattan Village, p.25. Lawrence, Op.Cit., p.300.

103. These are some of the supernatural characters found in Kashmiri folk lore. For details see Margoob Banihali's article "Some supernatural Characters in Kashmiri Folk Lore; Published in Kashmir folklore studies, (Ed.) Gulshan Majeed.

104. Anand Koul Bamzai, ***Kashmiri Pandits***, p.88. Lawrence, Op.Cit., p.130.

105. M. I. Khan, ***Experiencing Islam***, pp.93, 47.

106. The dawn of twentieth century ushered a new era in the history of Kashmir due to the modern means of communication and transport which facilitated contacts of people with the outside world. Those nurtured in religious milieu in the literary centres in India brought with them new tenants and doctrines hither to unknown to Kashmiri Muslim. One Hussain Shah Batku, who latter on became the founder of ***'Ahl-i-Hadith'*** movement in Kashmir appeared on the socio-

religious horizon of Kashmir in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and raised his voice against the prevailing beliefs, customs, rituals and above all the veneration of saints which he dubbed as unislamic and borrowed from Hindus. Hassan, Vol.I, p.42; M. I. Khan, Op.Cit., p.107; Moulana Anwar, Op.Cit., pp.36-37; Sonaullah Amritsari, ***Ahl-i-Hadith***, 2nd. Feburary, 1918; B. A. Khan, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. *Ahl-i-Hadith Movement in Northern India.*

107. Quoted by Ferguson. Also see P. N. Tickoo, ***Story of Kashmir***, p.255.

108. G. T. Vigne, ***Travels***, Vol.I, p.352.

109. Sunil chander Roy, ***Early History and Culture of Kashmir***, p.152.

110. Ibid., p.157.

111. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth*** (Kashmiri Folk songs), Vol.4, p.216. Aatish, Keshir Luke Beth (Kashmir Folk songs), Vol.7, p.27. There are dozen of local deities whom Kashmiri Pandits held in high veneration. In the valley number of temples have been dedicated to these deities. For full details see, ***"Kashmiri Pandits"***, Anand Koul Bamzai.

112. It is one of the most venerated temples of Kashmiri Pandits. Kashmiri Pandits flock to this place in great numbers. People abstain from taking meat before going to visit the temple.

113. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.4, p.216.

114. It is one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in Kashmir, situated on the height of 13000 ft., pilgrimages all over the country flock to the cave to have the glimpse of Shiv image of ice formation. The cave is said to have been discovered by a Muslim shepherd of Malik family of Anantnag. The holy cave is visited every year on 28th of July. For details, The Beautiful Vale, Samsar Chand, Ganesh Lal, Op.Cit., p.20. Vigne, Op.Cit., Vol.II, pp.8-10.

115. It is the beautiful spot in the Sindh Valley. According to the Hindu belief the sacred river Ganges originated from this place, so it is held sacred like the Ganges. The water of this lake is considered very holy and is carried by the pilgrims for use as an equivalent of the Ganges water. After cremating their relatives, Kashmiri Hindus took the ashes for immersion in the water of the Gangabal. Vague, Op.Cit., , pp.151-152.

116. In the village of Mattan, in district Anantnag, there is deep reservoir fed by holy fountains. To the Hindus of Kashmir it is as sacred as Gaya or Kurkshetra. People used to assemble here for purpose of ablutions, the first hair cut of their children and for other religious rites. The votaries visiting the shrine were made to sign the register after paying some cash to the priests. Ganesh Lal, Op.Cit., p.26.

117. M.L. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.5, p.117. ***Kashmir under Sikhs***, Sharma, p.93.

CHAPTER Fifth

Folk Literature - Mirror of Kashmiri Society

UNIVERSAL COMPUTERS

In the backdrop of the latest researches carried in the field of social history, the statement of Braudel that 'all the disciplines aim at capturing the society as whole' in its totality[1] looks more genuine, plausible, and result oriented when examined from the state point of history and literature. It has been found that the popular literature of the masses documents in an unpolished way the details and the various dimensions of a society in which it had been created. In the chapter under review an attempt shall be made to draw an illustration of Kashmir society (1819-1947) on the basis of its rich oral tradition.

1. *Family Life*

Family as the basic unit of human society has for times immemorial served as a dynamic agency to regulate the human relationship[2]. It plays a significant role in fashioning the socio-economic and religio-cultural make up of a society. Since family forms the fundamental unit of a social structure as such there can be no study of a society complete unless there is reference to the family life of society under debate. A careful study of Kashmir folk literature brings forth the unique characteristics like patterns of co-operation, social rivalry, feudal arrogance, peasant submission, catholic hegemony, peasant-artisan migration, matrimonial tensions, psycho-social insecurity and domestic conflicts. Kashmiri folk songs are replete with

references to the institution of the family. Different forms of Kashmiri popular poetry, besides, projecting a spectacular picture of Kashmiri family life also offers penetrating insight into the distinctive social mentality, which had been shaped by the peculiar political environ prevalent during the period of our study. The family in context of Kashmir society not only served as a symbol of social existence but it worked as an authoritative agency to regulate the schemes rooted in Kashmiri psyche and in its ethos. Kashmiris love and unmatching fondness for a family can well be ascertained from this folk saying.

Gara Vandehai Gara Sāsa Baraneirehai ne Zanh[3]
(I would like to sacrifice thousands of outdoor
comforts against single family pleasure)

In the following folk song an average Kashmiri seeks to surrender every material happiness for his home and his family.

Vandehai Zuv Jān Gara Vandehai,
Vandehai bāla paan gara vandehai,
lol chum ragi ragi vele Begrav
Dhan chum sholan gara vandehai,
Ghara Myon Shubevan Arzath jān,
Thez cham kya shāan ghara vandahai,[4]

(I ought to sacrifice all I have for you (family)
I intend to adore you with my flesh and soul.
The love which is ingrained in my veins,
I want to share it with all.
The mud stove (Dhaan) besides serving as a
cooking agent acts as a cementing bond,
None excells my family in majesty and
composition)

For the woman folk, the family holds more value than menfolk. Their activities largely remain confined within the four walls of the family. It is in no way

surprising, therefore, that the family and its allied concerns remained the prominent subject in Kashmiri folk literature.

There is an abundance of material available which tend us to suggest that there existed with equal magnitude, love and hatred, cordiality and rivalry, innocence and frailty in the body politic of Kashmiri social life. For example the uncle, which stands as a substitute for father in the latters absence is often referred as *Pitur* (an enemy) in Kashmiri family life. But inspite of this negative notion, there existed an inherent strength and potential in the organisational setting of the Kashmiri family which sustained the social coherence and the familial unity of the members. That is why we find that there existed joint family system in Kashmir during the period of our study.

2. *Joint Family*

Kashmiri family life did not undergo a drastic change even after the *mass* conversion which started immediately after the disintegration of Hindu rule in Kashmir[5]. The joint family system which had gained social currency and religions sanctity in the background of Hindu religious tradition continued to remain in operation in the valley.

A careful study of the different forms of Kashmiri popular literature reveals that during the period under reference there was a joint family system in vogue in the entire valley of Kashmir. The songs abound in description about relation of a bride with her mother-in-law, father-in-law, *Zaam*, (husband sister) *Drei kakeny* (wife of her husband's brother) *Droi* (husband's brother) *Peterhihur* (husband's uncle) *Peter*

Hash (husband aunt) In marriage songs particularly in *Wanvun,* all the relations referred to above are almost given in such an arrangement that suggest that their existed single source of their social sustenance. For example:

Bab Myon Thazras Kya Shūbeni
Mōl Myōn, dyad ho zāni lo
Tōth myon thazras kya shūbani
Mēj Myeny petcheny ho zāni lo
Kāka lala thazras kya shubeni
Kāka dyad sorey zāni lo
May tai mowath gatchi vansi poshani[6]

(with what grandeour, my grandfather adores the elevated spot in my home,
My grandmother never fails to admire my merit-she is conscious of my qualification (merit).
How elegant the spot looks, where my uncle uses to sit,
None excels my aunt in passion and love.
Let unity and love continue to sweeten our souls).

In Kashmiri family life *maas* (maternal aunt) and *Powaff* (paternal aunt) are kept in high reverence. The two relations are always considered as great source of comfort. That is why we find Kashmiri girls calling impatiently for the presence of *maas* and *powaff* on every auspicious or inauspicious occasion. The same feeling is expressed in this folk song.

Powaf dyad mayi chas wadi pērēni,
Māsa dyad jāma sherni chas,
Khāne mēj kyazi chak osh hārēni
Sag dyi haqi subheniya[7].

(How beautifully the aunt prepares her hair style,
The sister of her mother adorns her garments.
Don't shed tears, O, our beloved one,
We prey to Allah for your everlasting joy)

The prevalence of joint family system during the period of our survey though found as a common rule but there are evidences which prove that in rural and urban Kashmir there existed single family system as well[8]. The peculiar features found predominantly in the striking equation in Kashmiri family life was and continue even today. For example, in the joint family system, the relations of the father's side receive extra care and respect from all members of the family and in the single family scheme, the relations of the wife's side outshine husband's relations in prestige, position and rank. In a single family, *maam* (brother of the mother) was regarded as an important source of love, compassion, care and sacrifice but to its sharp contrast, in the joint family system, it was *powaf* (fathers sister) who assumed unprecedented power, respect and position. No social scheme could be executed without her approval and prior sanction. The assertion is substantiated by the following folk verses.

Powafi chas rechimis baba maliniye,
Babi chas rechmis powafi maliniye.
Mōj behai prārān māme senzi watye
Su hai chum logmut bāzār kathēy.
Yīna vely vely baras tha[19].

(I have been brought up by powaf in my grand fathers house,
She lulled and fed me with sweat milk.
O, mother, I eagerly wait for my mamaji,
I don't know who engaged him in dialogue on his way to his sisters home?
I wish his early arrival here so that,
I express my pain and sorrow to him.

The same feeling is expressed in the following lines also

Beni zei chey karān bartal ālau, walo mama lal kotchi kharum[10].

(Your two sisters look so impatient, o, mamaji.
They call you to provide me the comfort of your lap).

Inspite of every effort made by the elder members of the family to keep emotional bond of the family undisturbed, there are good number of references in different genres of Kashmiri folk literature which tend to suggest that some disintegrating agencies were simultaneously found at work, which intended to see that the traditional unity of the family remain exposed to incoherent and capricious exercises. See for example this folk saying-

Pyitreny gei marche pipeny,
natchni beger patchine
Pitur go mitchery kond,
atchne beger patchi ne[10+A]

(Aunt always looks in search of an opportunity to taunt and tease,
Uncle is just like a stingy shrub causing always trouble and torture)

According to the sources available, there existed generally three tier family system in Kashmir during the period of our study. The single family, joint family and extended family[11]. The extended family was the dominant form in both rural and urban areas of Kashmir. There were number of reasons responsible for its continuance.

In Kashmir, we hardly find any evidence from folk sources which would negate the proposition that the joint family often injured the incentive to work. Infact, the joint family structure, illustrated by number of Kashmiri folktales helped its members to undertake the hardest possible risky ventures.

2(a). Tension in the joint family

Different geners of Kashmiri folk literature afford graphic descriptions of constrained relations in the Kashmiri joint family system. A close examination of

Wanvun songs reveal that a Kashmiri woman whose husband had died or driven away from his home as a carrier to distant places as *begari* expected to receive moral and emotional support at the hands of related family members, instead, we find, that she was often made subject to inhuman oppression and torture at frequent intervals, she was forcibly driven out from her husbands house. She was thus allowed to exhaust her feminine charms either in her parents home or in the home of mamaji. The magnitude of the pain, experienced by such forlorn Kashmiri women may be Judged from the following folk verses.

Dur mālyon syir kas bavey,
myani kavai lo nata lo.
Hashi noshe kerey pam pam,
soi khabar boz malineo[12].
OR
Gowada kar miyonei chārō, ada neyr myn sardārō,
Lāla vun rozium narō, goda kar myoner chārō.
Yavenas gōm lure paro, gowada kar myonei chārō,
Ade ner myani sardaro[13].

(Being distant away from my parents home,
There is none, but the crow, whom I express my pain.
The news of the recurring scuffle between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law has been conveyed to my parents-
How painful it is.?!
OR
Console me, my lord, before you leave for distant lands!
I can not spend even a moment without you!
The *Hash* and *zaam* are my enemies,
They leave no stone unturned to tease me.
My youth has faded out, the fire of my youth has extinguished,
My enemies: saas, and zaam left no stone unturned to humiliate me.

It appears from the study of folk songs that the *hash* (mother in law) considered it her right to order about and scold the *nosh* (daughter in law). References to the conflict of *hash* and *nosh* abound in Kashmiri folk literature. Some times *nosh* after having won over her husband took the liberty to strike equally against the teasing behaviour of the *hash*. This scheme of domestic situation is very skillfully depicted by this Kashmiri folk saying

"Hash ti thez, nosh ti thez,
Deg dez te vali kus[14]"

(Both mother in law and daughter in law
equally acclaim the noble descent,
The cooking pot is about to get spoiled as
no one bothers to remove it from the
burning mud stove (Daan)

3. Marriage

Marriage is an institution which provides social approval or religious sanctity to the union of permissible males, admit men and women to family life[15]. Lunderberg defines marriage as "the rules and regulations which define the rights, duties and privileges of husband and wife with respect to each other[16]. According to Horton and Hunt, "marriage is the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family[17]. The definition of H.T. Muzamdar with regard to marriage looks move plausible keeping in view the Indian tradition of marriage system. HE defines marriage as a "socially sanctioned union of male and female, or as a secondary institution devised by society to sanction the union and mating of male and female, for purpose of establishing a household, entering into sex relations, procreating and providing care for the offspring"[18].

Keeping in view the pluralistic character of Kashmiri society, the institution of marriage developed and worked in Kashmir in tune with the different religious beliefs, traditions and social customs. The Hindus performed their marriage in accordance with the rules laid in the sameskars, while Muslim marriage in Kashmir was equally governed by Sharia and the customary laws. But the distinctive feature of Kashmiri marriage as the folk literature suggest was and continues to be its sacredotal character and under-lying social committment[19]. It is this identical feature of Kashmiri social life that had provided additional strength to it to bear the unimaginative shocks of social onslaughts. We see that at the time of the departure of *barat* from in-laws house, every parent of bride wishes for the joyous future of their daughter in her husbands house. The parents further guide their daughters to serve the husbands relations with utmost love and care. There is a folk saying in vogue in both Kashmiri Pandit's and Kashmiri Muslims with little variations which run as under.

Dōlī Tehāyak te arthi kediney[20] (Hindu version)
Zēnpana tchāyak te sembi kediney[21] (Muslim version)

(You have entered in your husbands house in a decorated Doli, you should leave this house only in coffin)

Both these folk expressions reflect the inner urge of the parents to see their daughters settled comfortably and for ever in the husband house. The following verse of the folk song also reflect the same notion and feeling, wherein the father of the girl expresses ardent desire to see that her daughter spends the entire life in compassion and joy in her husbands house.

' Sedi buthi khermakh dōli zenpanas,
gatchi woniy pānas vetey nai and.
Osh matai travtam tchaliy tchaliy
kensi nai and vot maliniye[22].

(With a smile on your face, I made you to sit in the Doli,
Let your destiny guide you to the everlasting good fortune.
Don't allow the tears to roll down from your eyes,
There is no option left but to say good bye to your parents home.)

Though there were no hard and fast rules with regard to the marriageable age of the boys and the girls, but a close scrutiny of the different genres of Kashmiri folk poetry leads us to maintain that girls in Kashmir were married at a very early age[23]. This is substantiated by the text of Nilmet-Purana and the Rajtarangni as well. Though there is no direct mention regarding the exact age of marriage in our source, but one could infer from the taxonomy of Kashmiri language that the marriage of the girls was generally conducted at the very early age. Words like *Shury Paan, bala pan, mur, lowakchar, baber, posh tur* are generally found in *Rov* and *Wanvun* in context of early marriage of Kashmiri girls. Kashmiri folk songs abound in references about the early marriage. For example.

Dur azlan lēgis bala paney,
gosh thavum keley mōj rāvay[24].
Khāne mōj ēses babe sandi garey,
deka lon tchorhem lokacharey[25].
Hai vesiye lokchar āsan kyoth,
maji seten malliyun bāsan kyoth[26].

(At a very tender age I was married in a village distant away,
listen patiently, O, my mother, my youth, my beauty will soon fade out.
In my mothers house, I used to be the sole object of love and attention,
What changed their mind? they got me married even before I attained the maturity.
Oh, friend, tell me how cheerful it is to be young?
I was married before I could enjoy my youth!

How beautiful it looks to enjoy the kiss of a mother!)

Along the folk evidences, the other literary sources also express that during the period under review, the settlement of marriage was exclusively the concern of the elder members of the family. Seldom was the consent of the girl or boy sought in the matter of selecting the life partners[27]. This scheme of organising marriages often resulted in divorces among the Kashmiri Muslims. This sort of egoistic behaviour exhibited by family elders has often been made a subject of ridicule by our folk bards. For example.

Ada khor ade lyok go mut chotye,
ami khota osweye mot ye jān[28].
Khaji muri yezar zan chai buhri
vehri thouwnam khulhas wath[29].
Handis tai hunis hankal kariva,
gowaden sery wo khuhas wath[30].

(The half bald, handicapped had almost turned gray),
the insane would have proved better than him.
The bells of his trousers are so wide to look like a sack,
Please keep the option of divorce open within a year.
(You tie together sheep and dog with one rope,
What a striking equation it is)!

In the process of marriage settlement little importance was attached to physical charm, economic background and the feminine attractions, instead what was generally taken care of was the physical fitness of the boy and the girl. This is testified by this folk expression.

Orzū te dor koth[31]

The fundamental consideration which generally governed the matrimonial contract in Kashmiri village and urban areas was that son-in-law or daughter in law

should be in possession of extra muscular strength so that he or she could share the hard agricultural and industrial labour in the extended family system. In Kashmiri village during the period of our survey, it was found that it was the father of the bride who bore all the expenses of marriage, but in a striking contrast in urban Kashmir, it was the father of the bridegroom, who had to bear extra expenses incurred on the marriage of their daughter. This is why we generally find daughter-in-laws moaning and wailing in rural Kashmir. The husbands family members by all purposes treated their daughter-in-laws more as a selling commodity rather than the respectable members of their family life. The detailed discussion on Kashmiri women would be separately dealt with in the next chapter under the title of "Kashmiri women as reflected in folk literature".

4. *Institution of Khana damadi*

Closely related to the institution of marriage in Kashmir, there existed yet another institution known as *Khana damadi*[32]. The institution, inspite of tremendous public indignation remained in operation in rural Kashmir for variety of reasons. The institution is said to have assumed alarming proportion during the Sikh rule in Kashmir. Under this system of marriage, a daughter when married was not sent to her husbands home, instead, it was the husband who had to come and settle down in his wife's home. In other words, it means a daughter whose marital curiosities are satisfied in her own parental home by her imported husband, traditionally called *khana damad*[33].

During the period under survey, it was found that the daughters in the rural social set up were generally denied the right of inheritance from fathers property.

However, under this scheme of Dukh-tarti- Khana nashin, daughters were entitled to get their share of the landed property if their husbands lived with their father-in-laws. The sources reveal that during the Sikh period, (1819-1846) this system had become popular and the unfortunate khana-damad was always sent for begar[34]. A dukhtari Khana Nashin, for the purpose of inheritance is treated as a son of her father and can claim position of her fathers property in exactly the same manner as any other son or sons if the property was not divided[35]. But under this scheme of social governance, the plight of *khana damad* was always sad and pathetic. He was treated as chattel or serf and was always subject to great injustice at the hands of his father-in-law and his own wife. Commenting upon the deplorable position of khana damad, Walter Lawrence writes, "If forced labour was wanted for transport the unfortunate khana damad was always sent. If he came back alive he won his bride. If he died it did not matter as the son of the house, at any rate, escaped".... At present the custom of khana damad, is very popular. It has two advantages. In the first place, the father of the girl receives a drudge who works like a slave for seven years, and in the second place, the expenses on betrothal and marriage are very small"[36].

A Khana damad in single family could not dare to dine even in presence of his father-in-law. He was treated as an outlaw in his own home. A Kashmiri proverb,

> Gar pettuk zamatur gō bara pethuk hōon,
>
> (a son-in-law lives with his father-in-law, is like a dog at the outer door)
> [stands witness to the degraded status of Khana damad.]

The institution of khana damad was mostly prevalent among Muslims, particularly in agricultural families. There is no evidence available in folklore which would suggest that the system was prevalent among the Kashmiri Pandits. However,

the magnitude of the hatred expressed by Kashmiri Pandits made some scholars believe that the system was in vogue among Kashmiri pandits as well. As already stated that marriage in the valley happened to be the sole concern of family elders. The consent of the boy or girl was seldom sought. However, parents of the boy and girl, before signing the marriage contract (nikah nama) did ask for the approval of the concerned. But it was more a formality than the intention of being governed by the religions canon. The silence of a girl was generally taken for her consent and approval. This is portrayed in this proverb

Sherif kori henz tschopay gō ankar

(The silence of a gentle girl means her attestation to marriage bond)

To arrange marriage, parents generally sought the services of a go between known in local dialect as *manzimyor*[38]. In peasant society of Kashmir, the role of go between was played mostly by village elders or relatives of noble nature. In urban areas, marriages were mostly arranged by *lanches* (eunuch) and aged widows. The maiden function in the series of the marriage ceremonies was known as *nishen* or *nabad nishan* (betrothal). On this day the elderly male members of the boys side formally visit the girls home with some presents, which generally include *ropa kery* (silver bracelets), *nabad not*[39] (typical ball like sugar cake) and some cash. The parties involved would take an oath to remain sincere, friendly and co-operative to each other. The oath ceremony was followed by a sumptuous feast arranged by the parents of a girl. During the intervening period between the *nishen* and *khandar* (marriage) parents of the boy and girl would exchange gifts especially on *lokut idd* (Id-ul-fitr) *Bed idd* (Idul-zuha) *Miraj sharif* and *Urs-nabi* [Prophet Muhammads (P.B.O.H)] birthday. During the period of our study, marriage function was usually preceeded by

uninterrupted musical exercises and *Bacha nagmas*[40] (dance by a beautiful boy). The day before the marriage, the side of the bridegroom would send a quantity of *menz* (mehandi) to the brides house, and she stained her hands and feet with the red colour. This function was named as *menzi rat* (mehndi raat) On the marriage day, the bridegroom after a bath would generally visit a local *astan* (Shrine) and would offer prayers and *fateha* to the dead family members. With a small party of close friends and relatives, the marriage procession accompanied by bhands and "mashalys"[41] would proceed towards the brides house. The entire sight of Kashmiri marriage is depicted in delightful manner in variety of Kashmiri *wanvun* songs. Some of the verses which give the vivid picture of Kashmiri marriage are given as under. These verses give a pen picture of the different stages of Kashmiri marriage from betrothal to the departure of a Kashmir bride towards her husband's home.

Vardan onmy lohory wanai,
Gulnury wetch shahanai cha.

Vardan legeth gah chak trāvan,
Jaman nery elravan chak[42].

Zona dabi ketchkhai mas mutchravnei,
tarkh tām vana nav ney draey[43]

Vosta kar onemy shahri shērāzai,
Yinō maharazō gam hekh kenh[44].

Menz lāgeyō athan tai pādan,
menzi sethy khoi ha chuy shahzādān[45].

Rāji ren tchayakhi gowasul khānas,
dowadh mej wēlzen pānas sēthy[46].

Vesaū kor gulimyoth hes dol pariyan,
ti rūdh veryyan tam mashhōr[47]

Astān atchewan salām kerizen,

kalimai Muhammad perizem[48].

Nikah chi lekhan setrey setrey,

Konge chei petrey te atrey sethy[49].

Salrav sāneu konga faroshaw,

logvō ronge kababan sāad[50].

Wazan myol kor gevas tai tilas,

sal chui kolgāmy tehsils[51].

Malinchi kunze kar dedi havalai,

ner vony veryviki sawalai[52].

I purchased your bride suit from the Lahore market
You see, it is unmatching regally.

You have selected a secluded spot on the balcony to set your hair in style,

On this Jubilant occasion, stars of the sky have started singing in praise of your beauty.

I have sought the services of a barber from sheeraz, be relaxed, o, bridegroom.

We are ready to dye your hands and feet with mehndi, dying hands and feet with mehandi had been the privilege of crown princes in the past.

Our crown princess had entered into the bathroom to have the brides bath, she is accompanied by lady go between.

When friends started presenting the gifts to the bride, people around got shocked, The story of the expensive gifts remained in circulation for long time.

Before entering the main gate of the neighbouring shrine, you (bridegroom) are cautioned to pay salute to the saintly soul.

Nikah (marriage agreement) is being written with utmost care. The saffron blades are used as pen and the scent of the rose is used as an ink.

Saffron sellers were our guests how delicious and tasty our wazwan was?

The professional chef had combined oil and ghee, The entire Kulgam Tehsil has been invited on this auspicious occasion.
O, bride, handover the keys of your parental home to your mother. The time has come to say good bye to your fathers home.

5. *Mangtawun (adoption)*

Adoption under no circumstances is valid under Muslim Law. But in Kashmir, this custom is followed with same spirit and zeal as it was observed prior to the establishment of Muslim Sultanate. In Kashmir village system, community of property rather than community of religion was and continues to be the basis of association. In code, Sant Ram Dogra writes

> *"Adoption is of Hindu origin and has been maintained among the Muhammadans inspite of all the bigoted attacks against this institution for the last six hundred years. The zamindars of the valley still think an adopted son as an heir as a real son"*[54].

The object of adoption among the Hindus during the period concerned was generally two fold, to secure performance of ones funeral rites and to preserve the continuance of ones lineage[55]. The objectives referred to above even today continue to govern the custom of adoption among Hindus. But among Muslim agricultural tribes of Kashmir on the other hand, customary appointment of an heir was and is in

no way governed by religious temper. It was and continues to be a purely socio-secular arrangement resorted to by a sonless owner of land in order to nominate a person to succeed him as his heir. The underlying intention of the exercise was not to obtain any religious benefit for the soul of the appointed, but to obtain a practical and temporal benefit. Under the scheme a sonless proprietor looked at the appointed heir as one who would live with him, give him company and help him in managing his land. In return of these commercial benefits, he offers the appointed heir the right of succession to his land. The right to make an appointment primarily vested in the husband. As per the folk reflections, this institution of adoption in Kashmir had a tremendous negative bearing on the social fabric of Kashmiri society. The unnatural appointment of heirs often deprived the legitimate right of natural heirs and it resulted in unimaginable crises in the Kashmiri family life. The disdain with which the society looked upon this un-Islamic exercise could best be understood from this satirical Kashmiri proverb

"Powatre bowachi hon kowachi"[56]

(An adopted son is just like a dog in the lap of a sonless mother).

During the period under review, a *hant* (barren) women was put to every kind of insult. She was ill treated and accepted as the bad omen in the family. The marriage with the barren woman often resulted in divorce in Muslim families. A barren lady was equated with an eagle as is evident from this folk saying.

Hānt geyi gānth[57]

(An issueless lady is just like an eagle)

6. *Dress and Ornaments*

Dress as else where, in Kashmir too, was determined more by geographical necessities rather than the aesthetic urge. Contemporary folk and creative literature, accounts of foreign travellers enable one to form a general notion of the various modes of clothing and costumes popular with the masses, landed elite and the ruling classes. Luxury as elsewhere, here in Kashmir, had very little role to play in setting the tastes, habits and fashions of the people regarding the dress and ornaments. Kashmiri folk tales and songs give a graphic picture of the various kinds of dresses people wore during the period of our study. No doubt, in conventional historical sources, we find enough evidence regarding the dress worn by Muslim religious elite like *Sayyids*, *Shaiks*, *Pirzadas*. But the fashion in their dress was governed more by religious considerations rather than the distinctive socio-economic fabric of Kashmiri society[58]. The evidences gathered tend us to suggest that the ulama generally followed the dress styles of upper strata of the society which include *choga, Kurta, Izar*, white mal-mal chaders on the shoulders and the white or green turban[59].

The aristocratic Hindus wore woolen shawls of different attractive colours. In a complete contrast to the dress worn by the ulemas, the dress used by Muslim Sufis and *Rishis* and the Hindu yogis used to be very plain, rough and simple.

6(a). *Dress of common people*

Due to the extreme poverty, the common people could not afford to have separate dress for upper and lower portion of the body. The villagers seldom wore *izar* (drawers). They used to cover their bodies with long rough, rustic and loose local gown known as *pheran*[60]. During winter months people wore *pety pheran* (woolen

pheran) and in summer months *pheran* made of rough cotton yarn was made use of. According to Hassan the custom of wearing pheran with wider sleeves came in vogue during the Afghan rule but the practice of using spacious trousers was the legacy of Mirza Haider Daughlat's reign. As already mentioned common Kashmiris, due to poverty, used to wear same woolen tunic for three to four years as the economic resources could not permit the frequent change of their raiments[61].

During the auspicious occasions like marriage and other related socio-religious functions, Kashmiri women dressed themselves in coloured *pherans* with beautiful embroidery work. This is depicted in various marriage songs. For example:

Phernas Chēnis Dōv Chuy Misrī,
Jigri az hai chey mēnzirat.
Phernas chenis mowakhta dāmānas,
mai thav nafsi Qūranas sethy[62].

O, bride Your pheran is adorned with Egyptian embroidery,
Be happy and jubilant, today is your mehandirat).
(The border of your pheran is decorated with pearls,
Let your life be governed by the spirit of the Quran)

It is believed that this distinctive part of the dress known as pheran had become a symbol of national identity during the period of our study. This long loose gown type of wear was considered an indispensable article of dress among all classes of Kashmiris. Its use was and continues to be much common during the winter months when it provides people with effective means of combating the unbearable cold. In the words of wake field and Biscoe, "every country through out the globe possess its own unique national costume, and the valley of Kashmir does not stand behind others in this respect. The Kashmiris too have a national dress peculiar to themselves. This national dress of Kashmiri is called pheran[63].

Both male and female of all classes and communities used *pheran* with slight variations. Though, it is said, the people under *pheran* wore *pyjama* or *shalwar* but the fact is not borne out by folk literature. No doubt, people of high social status might have been in the habit of using under wear garments but the aged persons living in the distant corners of Kashmir bore witness to the fact that average Kashmiri untill 1947, wore long pheran with no *izar* or *pyjames*. They used to wear the same, when on trip to distant town or Srinagar city. Non availability of under wear garments would often prove an impediment in their way of taking frequent tours to the near and distant places. This is evidenced by this piece of Kashmiri. *Lari Shah*

Phernas tele ches zanga nagai tai,
Khojaney venytav satar karnas[64].

(The legs of the bridegroom look naked under the loose pheran,
Is there anybody to request well off people to loan him one (pyjama) to cover his legs)

The sources reveal that among Muslims, men and women of religious classes were found in the habit of wearing under wear garments and among Hindus, official class and landed elite used under wear garments like *Izar* and *Pyjama*. In rural Kashmir, both Hindus and Muslims generally preferred to remain without pyjamas and izars.

In urban Kashmir, particularly in proper Srinagar, with the establishment of Sikh rule (1819) people began using trousers[65]. The well to do people in towns wore turbans as the headgear but the village folk and poor sections in towns wore a cap known as *bely tupy* which they did not change for years.

Dastar (turban) was considered as a symbol of status, dignity and respect. Hindus wore generally *dastar* of pink colour, while Muslims preferred to wear dastars of green and white colour. People with different professions wore dastars in different styles[66(a)]. The Brahmans, for instance, tied their turbans tightly like a head bondage, the skilled workers like carpenters and boatmen tied their dastars loosely. In villages, only Pandits, Pirs and Maliks wore dastar and the rest of the village folk used an ordinary *Sochli beli topy*. This is attested by this folk song

Dastār shūbān sabz pirzādan,
Gristeny chi kadan topeny keth[66-B]

(How beautiful green turbans look on
the heads of religious elite,
But how paining it is to ridicule the
peasantry for wearing an ordinary
cap).

It has been found that unmarried girls in Kashmir during the period under reference wore *Kurteny* (lady cut shirt) in addition to traditional *pheran* and their head was covered with a peculiar type of skull cap known in Kashmiri as *Takeny*[67].

After marriage, village women in Kashmir wore *kurteny*, coloured *izar*, long loose gown (pheran) and a special headgear popularly known as *Qasaba*[68]. A piece of cloth was thrown over the *Qasaba* which worked as a veil to cover the entire back.

The Muslim women of well to do families wore slightly different type of Qasaba, called *Khowanda Qasaba* (Taller Qasaba). The Pandit women's head gear or head dress was called *Tararga*. For pandit women, it was an important article of dress for the wedding day. See for example this *vig vatchun*.

Taranga putch kya chay goda telyye,
Dhara henz kur chak deka lesynae[69]

(the clubbed ribbon of cloth with taranga
fall graciously down your anklet,
You are the daughter of Dhar family, we
wish for the long life of the couple).

As stated earlier, Muslim ladies of affluent families generally wore *Thowanda qasaba*, which according to European travellers served as a sign of their superior status. Ladies with *Thowanda qasaba* were seldom seen unveiled and the purdah known as *burqa* was strictly observed by the ladies belonging to religious class and other well to do families. This is reflected in this Kashmiri *Rov* song also.

Thowanda qasābas rowape senze stichney,
Koney woney neran barney chaw[70].

(O, ladies of privileged families, your qasabas are tagged with silver pins,
The reason of your remaining indoors rests there).

In Kashmiri village life, the section of the local traders known as *weny* had generally been found of rich gestures. Keeping in tune with their wealthy prepositions, they wore the same dress as urban privileged. In summer, this class of commercial traders used spotless white trousers with narrow bells, long white *Kurteni* (cheemize) with sadri (vasket). In winter, they wore the sama dress but of woolen made. They also kept plain white chadar hanging over their shoulders[71]. In a complete contrast to the village community, this class wore a cap known as *Erqchin*[72] (special spherical type cap with golden embroidery work).

The dress used by Kashmiri Pandits slightly differed from their Muslim brethren. Instead of Izar, which the Muslims in towns wore, Kashmiri Pandits wore *Kutna*. It was made of white cotton during summer and in winter, it was made of local Kashmiri *Patto* (woolen cloth). In addition to this outer garment, Pandits wore a

peculiar type of undergarments known as *Shrane pate*. There is a Kashmiri proverb in use which runs as under.

"Batas kya chu shrane pates tel",

(Every body knows what a Pandit carries under his down garment).

A careful examination of folk literature tend us to hold that in Kashmir valley during the period under review, Purdah was strictly used by the ladies of Muslim religious class, ladies of well off Muslim and Hindu families and the women of Muslim Shia community. Women of skilled workers in Srinagar city also wore ordinary type of burqa known as *Keshur burqa*. But the women belonging to Muslim boatman community (Hanjis) *Kander* (bakes) *Dandar*, (vegetable growers and sellers) *Gury* (milk sellers) hardly bothered about the efficacy of purdah. In peasant society of Kashmir, except the women folk of Muslim Pirs, Sayyids, Babazadas, Maliks and Sheikhs, purdah was not maintained regularly and strictly. Women moved freely and helped their male family members both on the land and on the domestic front[73]. A Kashmiri poetic verse depicts the actual state of Kashmiri mind in response to the strict use of burqa.

Burqa mutchrith haw tai mahi taban
Chani jalwuk sowandari asi arman[74]

(Can't you uncover your face even for a while,
we eagerly await to see your dazling face,
We have cultivated an intense desire to have
a sight of your moon lit face)

From the earliest times, Kashmiri women had been fond of long, healthy, and beautiful black hair. To ensure the health and the vitality of their hair, they used variety of folk medicines. Long and thick black hair was considered an invaluable

wealth of a woman kind. There is a popular Kashmiri proverb which attests this assertion.

For example:-

"Mas go was"

(Hair of a lady is nothing less
than that of precious ornament)

There are hundreds of poetic verses both in creative and folk poetry of Kashmir, sung in appreciation of women's hair. The mode of hair style among Kashmiri women was also of unique fashion. It was drawn to the back of the head and dedicatedly braided, the braids were then gathered together in a single plait or plaits, which were terminated by the thick tussel (gandapan) which reached down to the ankles. This peculiar arrangement of hair was called *wankapan*[75]. The plaits were kept separately during the pre-martial stage white these were gathered together in a single plait and fastened with a heavy cord or tassel in the post martial period. One of the romantic poets of nineteenth century Kashmir, Rasul Mir praises the unique hair style of Kashmiri women in the following *Gazal*.

Zely wānkan keli yeli lagi shumar,
Bely lagnas genzranas lutch tai hazar[76-A.]

(When tomorrow the plaits of your hair are put to counting,
it will take enough time to count the plaits divided in thousands and lakhs).

During the months of extreme cold, Kashmiri villagers used to wear special leg cover made of Kashmiri wool. This woollen leg cover was known as *petav*. It was used by male villagers when they took outdoor exercises to a distant place. Even very recently, during one of my field trips to Kulgam area, I had a chance to see some

village elders wearing this sort of leg wear. It was used as a folk therapy to get rid of fatigue and to outweigh the chill of the winter.

6(b). Footwear

Due to availability of grass and wood in abundance coupled with scanty resources Kashmiris took recourse to simple, economic and durable type of footwear. In Srinagar and the adjacent areas, people (Hindu and Muslims) belonging to upper rung of social ladder used to wear a peculiar type of leather shoes locally known as *pezar*[76-B]. Besides this type of shoe, there was another kind of foot wear also in use known as *kunsh*[77]. The common footwear referred to in our folk sources was *pulhor*[78] or straw sandal. Both male and female members of village community used this kind of footwear when intended to set out on foot to any distant village, town or city. But within village boundaries, men and women used to wear wooden sandals known as *khraw*[79] (wooden clock). We find numerous references about *khraw* in our *wanvun songs*. Here we give only two verses:

Chāne sendi enymai khrāv hen melyye,
Thethy peth chelymai khower phelyye[80].

Yezman bheyi khrav tchen khowarnei,
malinik petchy hai poh heth aey[81].

[I managed to purchase a beautiful khrav from a skilled carpenter,
I will wash your delicate feet, you better place them on khrav (wooden clock)]

(Oh, mother of the bridegroom, put the khraw in your feet,
Your parental people have come with a *poh* (marriage money) and be ready to receive them with love and warmth).

The above folk verses indicate that *khrav* used to be an important article of footwear even on the auspicious occasion of marriage.

7. *Ornaments*

Kashmiri women through the ages, have exhibited a special weakness for wearing various types of ornaments and it continues even today. The women of higher strata especially pandit landed aristocracy, Rais Muslim families and ladies of religious classes like Sayyids, Mirs and Pirs distinguished themselves by using various designs of golden ornaments. The women of middle class satisfied their aesthetic urge by using silver ornaments. But those who could not afford them contended themselves with ornaments of less costly metals or other substances like sartal (brass). Kashmiri folk literature abounds in details with reference to variety of ornaments, Kashmiri women used to wear during the period under survey.

Inspite of being influenced by various cross-cultural currents through out the various phases of its history, Kashmiris, true to the distinctive tradition and geographical factors did not altogether forget to retain the local motifs present in the natural environ that surrounded the valley. These natural objects of beauty which fascinated the artistic imagination of skilled Kashmiri artisans found its expression in various designs of their ornaments. As on different Kashmiri artifacts, so in the designs of ornaments, we find, birds, fruits, leaves, flowers, occupying prominent position. Such art motifs were often engraved on Kashmiri ornaments in a manner in which the emphasis was laid not only on consummate craftsmanship but also on index of profound feelings for nature on the part of the maker[82]. It is recorded in the contemporary accounts that Kashmiri workers excelled in the making of different ornaments, especially ear rings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, amulets, rings, rosaries, head bends and crown jewellery.

Since the age under review was one of the ugliest periods of our history, people due to intense poverty could not afford to have costly ornaments. This remained the monopoly of privileged few. Women of common folk either used ornaments made of silver or ornaments made of brass or glass. A close examination of different genres of Kashmiri folk literature led us to suggest that there existed marked difference in the shape and the style of ornaments worn by the Hindu ladies and the Muslim women.

On the basis of folklore material, we have come to know that Kashmiri women used to wear following ornaments during the period under reference.

7(a). Ornaments of head and forehead

We find short of reference in our folk poetry and tales regarding any ornament that was used to adore the head. But the literary sources indicate that Pandit unmarried girls used four *chandras* or replicas of full moon, sewn on the skull cap. However, ornament used on forehead was worn alike by the Hindu ladies and the Muslim women. It was called *deka tika*. This ornament was also presented as gift to the new born babies. This is evidenced by these verses of Kashmiri *Manzely beth*.

i) Dekas peth sowana sund tika kya gormy,
kowarmy dile ke goshe nauv[83],

(what a beautiful tika, I managed to have for you,
I selected your name with intense love and affection)

ii) Dekas tika buthis nūr
Guru, Gūr, Gūrū, Gūr[84]

(With tika on your forehead,
I lull you to sound sleep)

The *tikka* was of three or four designs. This unique silver ornament which was tied round the head and was made of a number of cut out silver medallions fixed together like chain armour with fringes of Tiny darts falling on the forehead. The most delicate of these were shaped like fish, birds and flowers. It is because of its beauty and delicacy that a handsome girl is often equated with *deka tika* and there is a folk expression in circulation which runs as under:

"Zan chak deka tika hish"
(In beauty and delicacy you look like deka tika).

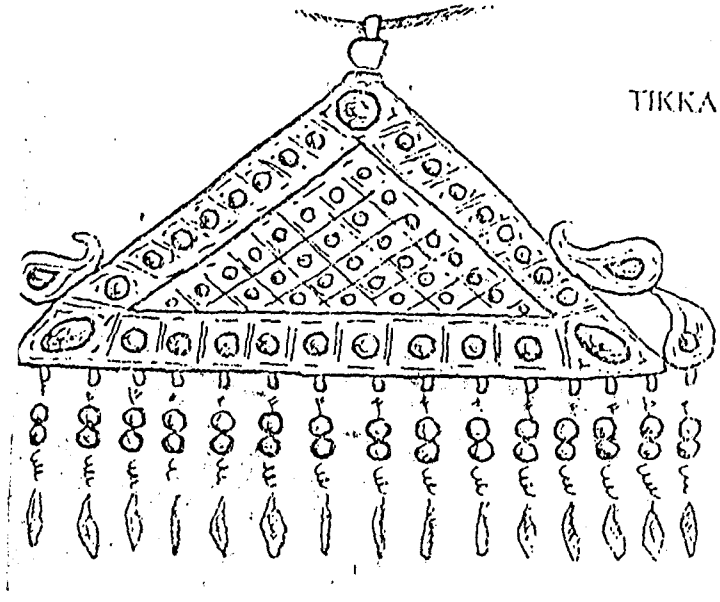
These verses indicate that wearing of ornaments in Kashmir did not start from the time one was married but these cradle songs (Manzely beth) suggest that parents often gifted ornaments to the new born and the same were used to add beauty and attraction for the new babies.

Wanvun songs are replete with references to the different kinds of hair pins used for attractive hair style. These cliff were generally of black colour. Women in rural Kashmir had a unique way of fastening their hair lock, which did not need any kind of cliff to get their hair tightened. It has often been the subject of poetic fency. For example:

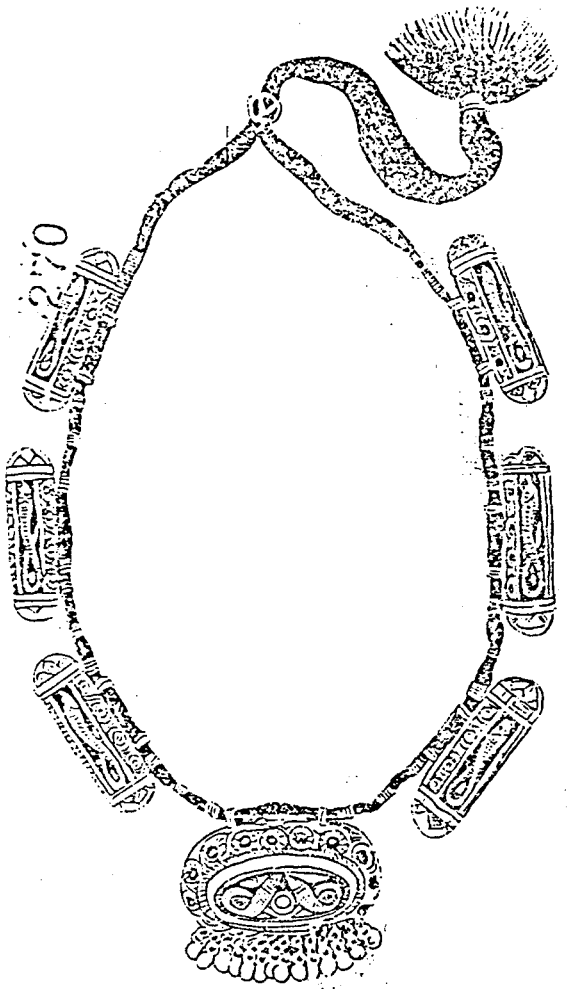
Zēly wānkan vely mutchrau,
bēly asi nmy tambalau[85]

(Don't enslave my soul, O, my beloved,
Your untying of hair knots is bewitching).

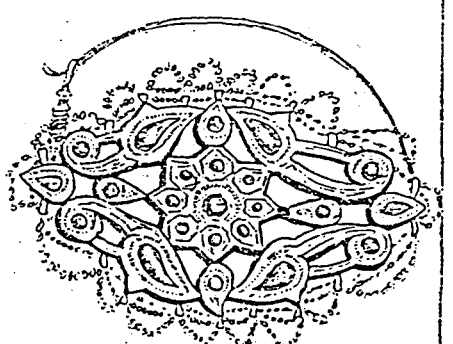
In addition to this, Kashmiri woman, used innumerable ornamental pins in their headgear *qasaba* to look it more beautiful and impressive.

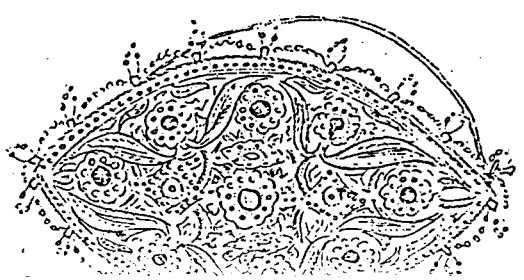


TIKKA



Ornaments For The Neck

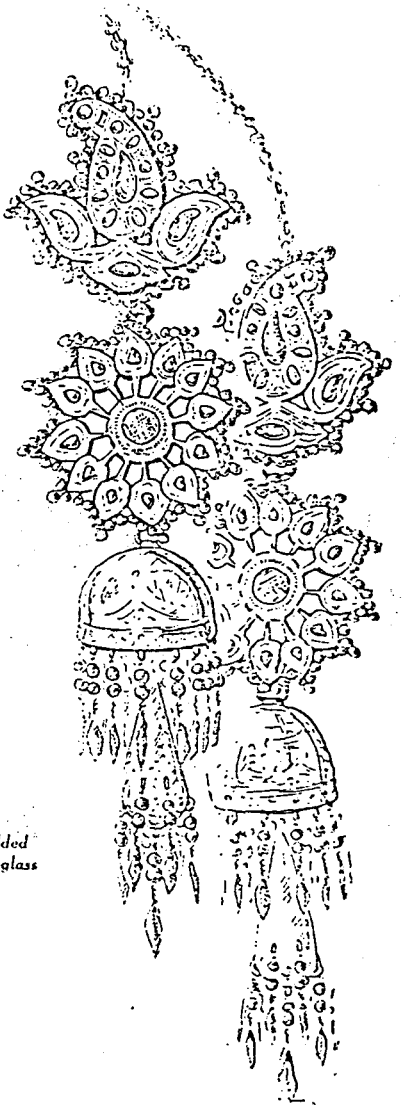




KANA–VAH
Ornaments For The Ears
Studded with coloured stones and decorated with

ALKA–HOR
Ornaments For The Ears
Hanging over the ear on either side of the head, connected by a chain running over the head.

Studded profusely with colourful stones and beads, with the metal serving as a relief for the stones.



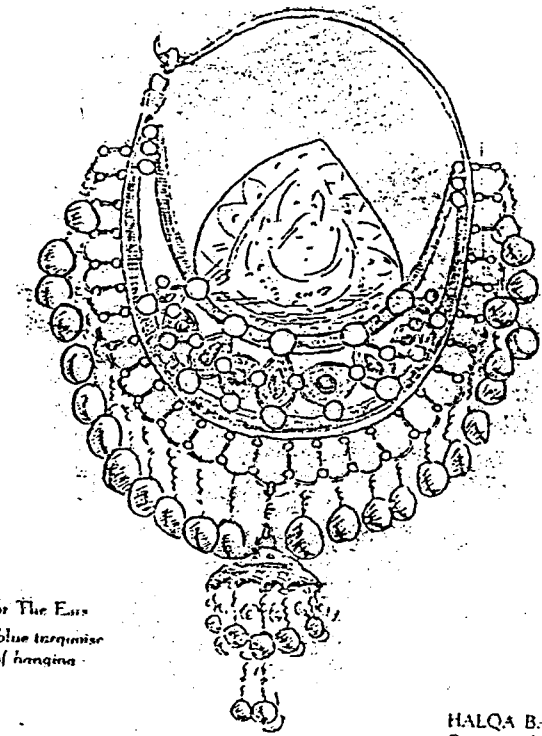
Gold or Silver studded with red or cloured glass and tones.

TIKKA:
Ornaments worn on the forehead
This may be of gold or silver studded with red and green stones fringed with hanging pearls and metal leaves.

Ornaments For The Neck

Sketches from Srinagar Museum by Triloke Kaul, and Miss Nivedita Parmanand.

A Kashmir Damsel Adorned with Typical Jewellery

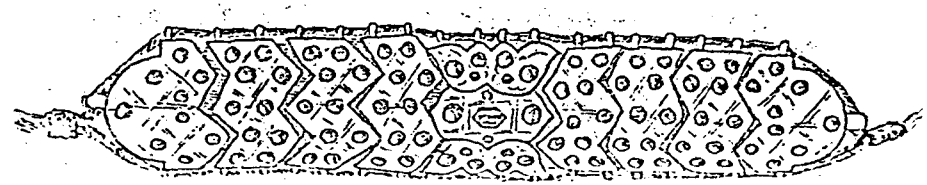


BALA:
Ornaments For The Ears

Studded with blue turquoise with a fringe of hanging gold balls.

HALQA BAND:
Ornaments For The Neck

Gold and Silver studded with red and green stones and sometimes mirrors.



7(b). Ornaments and Ears

Conscious of the nicety of ornamental balance, Kashmiri women during the age under review had developed unmatching quest for variety of ear ornaments. These include among other article *kenvej*[86], (earnings) *Jhumka* (tumbler shaped ear sings) Bali or Dor, Tops, *Alkahor*[87], *Durehor*[88], etc. These ear ornaments were generally made of silver, aluminium and in some cases gold according to the status and capacity of the wearer. The Hindu and the Muslim women wore ear rings of different designs and taste.

Keneveji: The most popular ear ornament used here in Kashmir was *kenevej*. Grouped together or in some cases suspended from each other, some seven or eight ear rings constituted one *kenevej*. Sometimes under its heavy weight the ear-lobb would develop deep cuts. Now the use of this type of heavy ear rings have fallen in disuse and only the fisher and boatmen women of Kashmir have preserved this ornamental relic of our times. Its impressive look can be imagined from this folk verse.

> Kenevaji yam chak eleravan,
> Asheqan dil chak tambalavan[89].
>
> (The moment you give jerk to your ear rings, scores of lovers wish to surrender their soul at your feet).

Another type of ornament for ear was known as *Jhumka*. It was worn on both sides of the ears. It was also termed as *kanedur* in Kashmiri languages. For its balanced aesthetic look, it was generally preferred by married and unmarried girls alike. Even at a very tender age, parents of the girls wished to adore their daughters with this kind of ornament known as *kanadur* or jhumka. This is evident from this verse of a Kashmiri *Manzely beth* (cradle song).

Kane dūr garyō Dowan lalan,
chita balan, chita balan[90].

(I wish to buy a costly jhumka for you,
but you exhibit a bit patience).

Kana bali

It was said to be a heavy fringed ear ring with decoration work. It was used on some festive occasions and during marriage ceremonies.

Alkahor

Another traditional ornament for ear was called *Alkahor*. It was connected with the help of chain round the outer portion of the ear. the ornament had a set of two balanced oval shaped images which remained hanging over the ear on either side of the head. It was fixed by means of a hook to the hole at the tip of the ear. In order to hold *alkahor* together, the ends of the *alkahor* were fastened with a cord which was fixed to headgear with the help of ornamental safety pins. Kashmiri pandit virgins used *Alkahor* in place of sacred ornament called *dejehor*.

Durahor

This ornament was fashioned in a regal way to suit the taste of the ladies belonging to well to do families. It was studded with red and green stone and pearls and had a silver or golden coat. The ladies of the aristocratic families used this ornament on special occasions like marriage.

Dejihor

It was one of the ornaments of prime importance among Kashmiri pandits. It symbolised the post marriage sacred alliance between the husband and the wife. It was

and still is worn by Kashmiri pandit lady on the eve of her marriage. It served as a *managal sutra* for Kashmiri pandit lady. It was (continues to be in tradition) made of gold and its size and weight depended on the status and position of wearers family.

7(c). Ornaments For The Neck

We find enough information in Kashmiri *wanvun* songs about the ornaments used by Kashmiri women to adore their neck in Kashmiri *Wanvun* songs. The most popular category of neck ornaments was known as *har*. It was used by both Muslim and the Hindu ladies only after marriage. Ladies of affluent families wore *chandan har* made of gold but the ladies of general category often wore chandan har made of silver. *Chandan har* with more strings was considered to be more invaluable and a mark of high social status. Besides, *chandan har* (which was composed of several strings) other ornament of the same size and shape was named as *halqa band* (necklace). These neck ornaments namely *har* or *halqaband* were studded with precious stones and were of different fashions which happened to be altogether different from one another. Before marriage, girls usually wore amulets round their necks which were known as *Dolan Mal*.

There was yet another ornament known as *nama* which was worn by newly married Kashmiri women. It was betal leaf shaped pendent usually made of gold or silver. Here is a verse from Kashmiri folk song *wanvun* which show the intense fondness of Kashmiri daughter for this particular ornaments.

> Nāmā gormas rope sund hati travas,
> Jan panenuy ayut vensi thavas[91]
>
> (With intense love I managed to buy silver nama, for my sister,
> I assure her to gift my life, if she ever demands it)

Chapkal

It was a unique ornament comprising of small inch long pieces with holes at two ends. Scores of such pieces were threaded together at both the ends. There were four or five such rows put together and right at the centre, there were fixed together by a central medallion type piece. The edges of various cords were fastened closely together. The ornament was worn close to neck with the medallion stilling right over the centre of the throat. The ends of the cords were fastened at the centre of the neck. This was so attractive an ornament that the mothers often refer to the ornament to lull their babies asleep. For them it looked as a beautiful toy. This is borne out by this line of Kashmiri cradle song.

Powafi hendi tatheu chapkal garyo,[92]
karo mej lejyo ho tai hō.

(O, the beloved one of your bua, I will gift you a beautiful chapkal,
But have a sound sleep in your buas lap).

Another ornament which was used around neck by Kashmiri women was known as *matarmal* (peas shaped necklace). It was usually used by the ladies of rich families but women belonging to lower income group had managed its substitute to satisfy their aesthetic impulse. In the imitation of *matermal* the ladies of common origin used, ornaments like as the substitutes of maternal.

Ledramal, tarakh mal,dolnimal, khelymal, bowakwachi mal, etc etc. All these necklaces were designed in tune with the economic level of the common folk and the ladies belonging to this category took extreme pleasure in wearing the above referred to ornaments: Here is a folk verse to substantiate our argument.

Lolan tche dolan kemy geri,
melī ha buz bhay rajan geri[93].

(who made such beautiful dolan for you,
o, bride, I have heard that these were
got made by your lonely brother).

In addition to these ornaments, we find reference of two more variation of the necklace under the name of *Hateful* and *Wetchitroto*. This is further evidenced by the following lines of this Kashmiri folk song:-

Vata vata rayo kowali wuzi poni,
nely trot garyo ardah dont[94].

Hati chus hanga trot, meti gatchi na sana,
kya sana Angrez Feshun av.[95]

(The moment water gushes down to the stream
I promise you to give trot of eighteen grams)

(Your neck is adorned with trot, I also aspire to
have one, look it is in imitation of English
fashion)

7(d). Ornaments of Fingers

After studying almost all marriage songs, we have been led to this conclusion that there existed only two types of finger rings, one known as *Enevej* and *Beg-vej*. Enevej was designed after yemberzal (narcissus) flower with four or five small leaves of the same flower. It was adorned with some tiny glass pieces whose reflections dazzled the viewers eyes in the bright sunny day. The another kind of vej was named as *Beg vej* It had a large circular sphere and in the centre it was studded with a big precious red stone. It was further enclosed with four small jhumer type balls. This kind of vej was presented as a betrothal gift to the would be daughter-in-law. I quote a verse from folk song which contains reference about these two ornaments.

Enevej legith nowash kya toshan[96],
Begy vej wetch kya prazlān chas,

(With an enevej in her finger the bride does not lake notice of anyone around,
And the reflection of begy vej dazzles the vision of the viewer).

Finger rings constituted an essential part of the entire ornamental scheme.

7(e). Ornaments for the feet

As mentioned earlier, Kashmiri women valued ornaments more than their lives. They regarded it impolite to wear ornaments on their feet. That is why we hardly get any reference of feet ornament in our literary sources. The only ornament used for the area referred to was *Gode kery*, an ornamental chain with ball like bells tied round the anklet. It was generally made of silver and was used only on special occasions by a section of professional singers and the others of like taste. Our historians seem to be misled by the accounts of European travelers, who after witnessing Kashmiri professional dancers wearing the anklet like ornament formed the opinion that feet ornaments constituted as one of the commonest articles of ornament among Kashmiri women, *Netha koj* (thumb ring) and *Gode kery* were generally used by the ladies of particular section of Muslim community known as *Wattals*. The ladies of these community acted as professional singers and dancers and their services were sought to entertain the state guests[97]. That is why we find numerous references regarding *gode kery* in our *Rov* songs. For example:

Rowani godan beni lejyo,
Kati oseham qarar chuyo[98].

Hati hatiphol,
gowaden gowade keryye[99],
Shama sowanderiye vardan lāg.

(How you bore the pangs of separations,
I still remember the jingling of your godakery
(The bride is wearing necklace round her neck,

how beautiful her feet look with godakerey)
(Time has come to wear a bridal suit, be ready to leave your parental home).

The commonest ornament with sacred touch popularly known as *Taweza*[100] was used equally by both the sexes among the Hindus and the Muslims. It was generally used to ward off the evil eye. It was commonly put under silver biscuit or copper case or put under green or black piece of cloth. It was worn either round the neck or tied round the arm. These amulets were designed after many objects and they were named after these objects. People wore these amulets on the advice of Pirs in case of Muslims and Brahman pandits in case of Hindus. It will not be out of place to mention here that domain of ornamental adornment was an exclusive field of fair sex. Men folk seldom used ornaments except finger rings.

8. Dwellings

As in archeology, the historian, in folklore also expects information about the material aspect of life, such as economic arrangements, construction of houses, implements and tools, skill and crafts, and the people's control over national resources.

No doubt, the conventional historical sources like archeological remains, archival material, personal diaries, official records help the researcher in understanding the facets of human society and history in a systemic chronological order but the latest researches carried in the domain of historical literature have proved that without examining the source that springs from the core of society and rooted firmly in the ethos of that society, that is folklore, one can not draw an objective picture of the different dimensions of the social life of that society. Judged

against this background, an average Kashmiris urge to have his own independent dwelling from the times distant past suggest to maintain that the *Ghar* or *ler* (house) for Kashmiri does not only mean a material structure to house him and his family in but it symbolises his emotional relation with the environ around and the possession of a house proposes his application to this kind of social responsibility. As a result of this intense urge and desire for a separate home an average Kashmiri prefers natural disaster over the homely discomforts. This is evident from this Kashmiri proverb.

"Sere wāv esin[101]
dere wāv me esin"

(Let the natural calamity dispossess us from all,
but our dwelling must remain safe).

An indication to the same state of social urge is expressed in the following Kashmiri proverbs also:

i) Ghare vandehai ghara sasa bere[102]
nerehai ne zenh
ii) Tcheri chu beh theri peth

i) (I prefer my small rustic cottage to the thousands of big majestic mansions)
ii) (A sparrow feels safe and comfortable in her own delicate nest)

The inordinate urge of being in possession of a house is artistically portrayed in the following folk verse.

Siras sarpōsh ghara chumnā[103]
Me kabas sheri bhar chumnā
Yi panas vesy satar chumnā
Siras sarpōsh ghara chumnā

(My house provides covering to my secrets,
The front doore of my house faces the direction of kaba
O, friend my house is the garment of my body,
my house provides cover to my secrets).

References to the type of dwelling Kashmiris had during the period under survey tend us to suggest that it was the dream of every Kashmiri family to have its own home according to ones economic provisions and domestic needs.

In rural Kashmir houses were generally built of unbaked bricks, stone and wood. They were generally two to three storeys high with *keni* and *Brer keni* to house the necessary firewood and other related material for the use of winter months. The ground floor was almost kept for the cattle and the second storey to house the family members. The third storey was meant for storing food grains that was kept in rustic mud cylinders known as *Lowapeny*[104]. These *lowapenys* were kept fixed and were not moved frequently from one place to another. IT is because of its immovable placement, that in Kashmiri language, a person who remains stagnant without any work is often addressed *zan chuk lowapen* or *Tche kiyazi chuy lowapun hieu go muth*[105].

(As if you are lowapen-a body without soul)
or
(Why you look soulless like lowapun)

Keeping in tune with the geo-climatical setting, houses both in Srinagar city and villages were provided with sloping roofs, resting on walls with gable ends. The wooden rafters of the roof were covered with a layer of birch bark over which clay was laid.

The houses of the poor had a roof with a thatched straw and also rough shingle. The roofs covered with clay would look colourful in sont (spring) with lilies grown on them[106]. This is indicated from this verse of Kashmiri folksong:

Range range posh phely burzey pashney[107],
Konai chava hesheney lol begran.

(variety of flowers bloom on the earth covered birch bark roofs,
why don't you (girls) sing in praise of mother-in-law of my daughter)

A trap door was usually kept on the roof to provide access to the members of the family to ward off heavy snow from the roofs during the months of *chilay kalan*[108] (months of extreme cold). Sometimes, these Trap doors (vowagas) provided easy access to thieves to break into the house, as is indicated by this song

Dāri kiny akho, ya akh woagey,[109]
Tche kuso dakha kery thei drakh.

(May I know whether you (thief) entered from window or trap door,
You had slipped away unnoticed after causing much damage)

According to an European Traveler, the farm houses in the valley resembled the European houses of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and looked from a distance picturesque surrounded generally by the walnut, mulberry and the Chinar trees. The animals kept in the ground floor provided warmth during the chilly winter months. The inmates often liked to spend their night at *dengig*[110] during the months of extreme cold. But spending nights at dengigs for quite a long time with little or no exposure to open fresh air often caused lung diseases like *asthama, sila* or other like disease. In order to get rid of bad effects of wasteful material, piled often in courtyards during winter months, people would eagerly wait for sont or spring. To the ailing and sick Kashmiris spring meant rebirth or new life. This state of Kashmiri mind is well depicted in this *Rov* song:

Sont āmey dēdy balnam sēri,[111]
Wande tcholomy gam balnam sēri,
Guh angani wetchi mōji chekrith,
di pej tai pate techelnam sēri,

(My all ailments would vanish, spring has set in,
The winter has gone, with it, will fade all over miseries

The cowdung is spread all along the cottage lawn,
O, mother, give me willow basket, I along with my friends shall take it to the fields as a manure).

There is no denying the fact that little effort was made by the dwellers to keep their surrounding clean. We find scores of references in different travel accounts regarding the unclean surroundings of Kashmiris. But this might have been perhaps due to the abundance of snow fall and the slippery paths which could have hampered the dwellers to lake the human and cattle waste away to the distant fields.

Both in villages and in the city, people used *vageuy*[112] (mats) and slept on them. In the words of Lawrence, "A cotton spinning wheel (Yender)- a wooden pestle (mohul) and motor (kang) for husking the rice and few earthen pots for cooking and earthen Urus (lowapen) for storing grain were the only utensils found in every household of Kashmir."

There is an ample evidence available in our folktales which tend us to believe that in both rural and urban Kashmir, people who had some association and intimacy either with the ruling elite or official class were in possession of big and capacious houses decorated with delicate lattice work.(Pinjra kari) Such houses were often used as rest houses by the touring revenue officials and other European travelers during the period of our study[113]. In Srinagar city, the houses of wealthy *karkhanadars*, Muslim Rais families like *Shahdad, Kheshery, Kawoosa Mattus*, *Naqshbhandhis Mirza's Dhars*, Ganjoo[114] and other collaborators of the raj usually stood in a majestic cue on both sides of the river Jehlum right down to the Habba Kadal bridge. These houses were generally referred in Kashmiri literature as *mandori*, (mansions) or *Rangelari*..

These houses projected the exemplary architectural uniqueness of Kashmiri skill and craft. The lattice work coupled with different shades of thin glass added to the beauty and attraction of these big mansions. Some of the structures which escaped the ravages of the time stood even today as the relics of the feudal taste and temperament. Our folk songs abound in references about these palace like mansions and there are number of expressions used in our creative literature which indirectly refer to these majestic buildings. Some of the expressions are

Enadab, Range mandori, Gutchi Kuthi
Zona dabe, Prange perau, Robakhane etc. etc.[115]

These folk expressions not only serve as a pointer to the architectural excellence of the time but it also serves as an indicator of the high aesthetic taste of the well off Kashmiri families. These houses, built on the either side of the river Jehlum or *Vitasta* served as the objects of great attraction for European missionaries and travelers. Some times these people expressed intense desire to stay in these beautiful houses rather then to halt in the allotted official rest houses. The architectural niceties and the beauty of these houses is versified in these lines of Kashmiri Folk songs

i) Zely panjrau menzy nazr trav bēli asi my tambalaū,[116]
Kama div hai angan tehav bēli asi my tambalaū.

ii) Ena dabi hai rovum, dediya lō,[117]
mely sund hai osum dediye lō.

iii) Gatchi kathi temy sund bronth Geyōmy[118],
Teti vutchmas may Tēhāyan,
Be hai pata laras, veni nai amy,
namai sōzces tūry.

iv) Ranga kuthi karyō prange vethrōn,[119]
tathi vele sōn tathi vele sōn.

i. (Don't ignite my passion o, my beloved, you look so bewitching from the tiny holes of lattice work window)

ii. (I have lost somewhat invaluable in a glass balcony.
Could you tell me the name of a missing article?
I believe, my beloved had entered into a colourful decorated balcony.

iii, I, unconsciously started following her shadow, but I found none/ What a great loss was!)

iv. (If you (beloved) ever pay visit to my house, I assure you to provide a private corner with all comforts and luxury).

From the above folk verses, it may be deduced that the rich trading families, official elite and those families having close proximity with the Raj enjoyed every comfort of life. These people used to live in big majestic houses with every kind of domestic comfort which suited to the feuded tastes and liking. On the other hand majority of people lived in dungeon type houses surrounded by filth and cattle waste.

9. *Food and Drinks*

Food and drinks constitute as one of the most important dimension of any human society. An attentive study of the sources led us to believe that food and

drinking habits of Kashmiris were generally governed by three factors, geo-climatic factor, religious factor and economic factor. Further, the literature, particularly Kashmiri folk literature present two divergent versions of the food habits of Kashmiris. In folk songs, we find abundant references about the sumptuous dishes, prepared generally on auspicious occasions like marriage and other related occasions. But in Kashmiri folktales, we come across detailed description of the dishes which constituted the major food culture of average Kashmiri. In Kashmiri *wanvun* songs (marriage songs) an intense desire is expressed by women folk to have an opportunity to enjoy sumptuous dishes of Kashmiri *wazvaan* like *Qarma, Rista, Roganjosh, Kabab, Yekhni, and Gowashtaba,*[120] while in folktales, the characters involved demand for less expensive and self nurtured wild vegetables like *hand* (Dandeliow) *kretch* (Knapweed) *Obej* (Sorrel) *nuner* (Common purslane) *Sowatchal* (Common mellow) *pamba hak* (Indian rhubarb) *tchoka ledder* (Polygonum alpinum) *Heder* (mushrooms) etc and other vegetable of like nature.

A close examination of contemporary literature reveals that rice as in the past, continued to be the staple food of Kashmiris during the period under review. It was cooked in earthen and copper pots, known as *deg* or *lej*. A corresponding substitute for English saying "Face is the index of mind" runs as

"Bete leje chi wetchan pethe kani"

(The lifting of the lid of leji (pot)
tells the actual state of cooking
material)

The fondness of an average Kashmiri for rice may well be discerned from the scores of rice varieties we come across the different forms of folk songs. Similarly

there are dozen of Kashmiri sayings and proverbs which contain reference to *bhata* (cooked rice) and the repeated description of word *bhata* innumerable folk expressions speak of the magnitude of Kashmiris fondness for *bhata*. Here I quote some of the folk sayings and proverbs which contain the expression of *bhata*.

a) Bete Bete te pyade pate[121]
b) Bete dag aseny,
c) Bete bete karun,
d) Bete kothi aseny,
e) Bete betchy asun,
f) Bete shropeye kath chropeyyine
g) Bete phelyn pyon.

a) (There is a strict vigil on very grain of rice)
b) (Scarcity of food (rice) leads to death and starvation)
c) (In a situation like drought or famine, people die for a grain of rice)
d) (Rice or bhate is the only source of sustenance)
e) (To cry repeatedly for rice (bhata) brings shame and ridicule)
f) (If you can digest a plate full of rice, (bhata) why can't you maintain the secrecy of confidential matter).
g) (Taking excessive bhata is a curse rewarded with shame and insult)

The above cited folk expressions tend us to suggest that the rice though produced in abundance in the valley failed to feed its producer (tiller) as it was found to be an uncommon commodity due to the restrictions imposed by the Sikh and subsequently by the Dogra rulers[122]. The elite oriented agrarian policy followed by the Sikhs and the Dogras crippled the very existence of the tillers. They were heavily taxed, ruthlessly fleeced and mercilessly beaten by inhuman revenue officials[123] and their local agents like muqadamas, patwaris, kardars, sozawuls and shakdars. The following passages gives the graphic picture of the food scarcity during the period under observation. "It is a strange irony of the fate that the Sikh administration

exported large quantities of rice to Ladakh, Tibet, Iskardu and other parts of Central Asia, but the poor classes passed their worse days mostly on vegetables like cabbage, turnips, lettuces, pumpkins, spinach and carrots. The people who lived near lakes took *Singhara* (water nuts)[124] as a substitute for *bhata* (rice)". The entire situation is portrayed in a pathetic way in this Kashmiri folk boat song:

Gēri hai nerō Tcharni Sarnei,[125]
Kēly hō sarinei che mernui lō.
Gareu setein yed chem bernei,
Kely ho sarinei che marnei hō

(Let us move friends towards lakes to search for water nuts,
We know that we are destined to die one day.
Let us fight the pangs of hunger by eating water nuts,
We know that we are destined to die one day).

The fact or the message contained in the above referred folk boat song is substantiated by Sir William Moorcroft, who visited the valley in 1823. He observed that waternuts alone formed, "almost only food of at least thirty thousand persons for five months in the year". Keeping in view its nutritious value, the Hindus of the valley usually took the bread made of singhara flour on special days when they observed fast to please their dieties[126].

Victor Jacquemont attributes the Kashmiris fondness for low caste vegetables to his utter economic poverty. He observed that "the Afghans, last century, having deprived the Mughuls of that conquest, and the Seikhs (Sikh) haven driven the Afghans from it, a general plunder followed each new conquest; and the intervals of peace, anarchy and oppression, doing their best against labour and industry, the country is now so completely ruined that the poor cashmerians seem to be despair, and have become the most indolent of men. If one must starve, it is better to do at

ones ease, than bend under the weight of labour. In Cashmere there is scarcely more chance of getting a supper for him, who tills, spins, or sows all day, than for him who being rendered desperate, sleeps all day under the shade of a tree"[127].

Even before the advent of Islam in Kashmir, the Kashmiri Pandits had developed a keen taste for meat preparations. But with the coming of the Muslims from different regions of Central Asia and Persia in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, Kashmiris food habits underwent a drastic change. The present *wazwan*, a special variety of Kashmiri *dastarkhan* is said to have been introduced in Kashmir during the sultanate period. The dishes served in Kashmiri *wazvan* include among other things *methi, tabaqmaz, Deny, Rista, Kabab, Roganjosh, Qowarma, Dupeaza* and *Gowastaba.* The *wazwan* was and is generally arranged on marriage occasion and other festival days. Four persons together share one *bhata tram*[128] (big copper rice plate). Special type of movable wash basin known as *Tasht-nar*i is used for washing the hands before the *wazwan* is served to the invited guests. Such type of sumptuious dishes were and still are severed on other socio-religious occasions also.

In rural Kashmir, eggs constituted as major dish of hospitality. Guests especially family Pirs were often served with multiple of preparation. Fowl to an average villager was nothing less than a golden bird. This was served on special occasions to the respectable guests. The death of a fowl was mourned for days together by a Kashmiri villager. In extreme situation of economic poverty, fowl was used as an important gift item to appears corrupt officials of revenue and police administration. This is pointed by one of the scenes of Kashmiri folk play "*Raza pether*"[129]. In addition to this there is an important Kashmiri folk song under the title

of *kawaker nama*, which describes the pain of an average Kashmiri villager caused by the sudden death of a fowl. For example:-

Haī koawkri lōl chon amy[130],
Phah thūlan thowthamy khānmy,
hai kowakri lōl chōn amy.

(We mourn your (fowl) death very sadly,
You remain ever alive in our memory,
You left us at the time when eggs were half hatched)

Due to peculiar geo-climatic conditions, Kashmiris developed a unique food culture, according to which Kashmiri women folk dried fresh vegetables like tomato, brinjal, turnips and other vegetables at the out set off the autumn season, and the same were used during the months of *chiley kalan* (severe cold). this dried up brand of vegetables was known as *hokhe siyun*[131]. People enjoyed these dry vegetables during the long winter days when passages altogether remained snow bounded and when due to severe cold vegetables ceased to grow in the valley.

In the like manner, Kashmiris showed intense fondness for various categories of dry fish. The two common categories of dry fish were known as *Raza howagard*[132], and peche *howagard*[133]. In addition to this there was yet another kind of fish which was burnt in a grass and it was known as *Fer* in Kashmiri language. These categories of dry and burnt fish were generally taken during the months of severe cold. Besides, these categories of dried fish, Kashmiris enjoyed various kinds of fresh fish also. The fresh fish was usually prepared with *Dal nadru*[134] (Lotus roots of Dal lake). To make the dish more tasty and delicious, woman used to add a little piece of *Kashmiri veri*[135] (chilly cake) to it. This is also reflected in one of Kashmiri proverbs. For Example:

"Feri ohe shūban Ver"[136]
Cheri che shūban ther.

(A burnt type of fish (Fer) is tastless without veri (chilly cake)
(A sparrow looks safe on the branch of a tree)

During summer months, fish was generally avoided as according to popular belief it is fatal to take fish in during hot days. The same impression is carried in this Kashmiri folk saying:-

"Harech gad te larech gunas gexi barabar cooked"[137]

(To take cooked fish in summer is equally dangerous as poison).

Kashmiris seldom used pulses during the summer months but the same were taken in abundance during the long winter months. According to folk medicinal belief since pulses generate more heat and acidic reaction in hottest period, it therefore damages the digestive system. Therefore the terms like shuhul garm are given due weightage by average Kashmiri in the selection of their food articles.

During the months of *chiley kalan* (22nd December to Ist of March) to combat coldness people at intervals also cooked a nutritious dish known as *kretcher* (khichdi) and it was generally shared by all members of the family and some quantity of it was distributed among the neighbours as well.

Heresa[138] formed yet another winter dish of Kashmiris. There were special shops where *heresa* was sold. People exchanged this dish in the early morning hours. People exchanged this dish as an article of gift too among themselves and gifting of *heresa* as a present was taken with great love and care.

Another food item known as *Shabdeg*[139] was also in use during the period of our study. It was served on special occasions at the advice of family Pirs and the

priests. In addition to this special type of food item, there were other food items like *Tehr, Dowadevegre, Tethely bhata*, which were served particularly to small children with the intention of remaining safe from the affect of the evil spirits. These food items were generally prepared on some special occasions at the advice of family pirs or pandits. There was yet another type of community food known as *Sasa ras* which was prepared with collective effort. After distributing this special type of food, mass prayers were held either in the open air or in local mosques, where in people invoke the help of Saints and God to lessen the effect of occurred natural calamity like flood, fire, earthquake, famine, drought and epidemics. There are number of children songs in Kashmiri folk literature which throw immense light on these community served foods. In the following children song, boys ridicule those who fail to offer oil, ghee, firewood, rice and cash money to them children for arranging and preparing the community meal. For example

Agar to agar yeth garas gagar,
Harket zi harket yeath garas barkath[141].

(Let the rats damage the household goods of these families, who refused to contribute for the community meal,)
Let God shower bounties of blessing on the inmates of the house, who generously contributed for the community meal.

There is another children' song which is sung by the children in praise of those who came forward with generous gifts for preparing the community meal for the purpose already referred to. A line of the song runs as under

Hupā hupā dhāni shupā,[142]
Sēri venytau balai dafā
Hupa hupā dhani shupā
Ya Shāikh sana ober fanā

(Every family is requested to offer enough shalli (unhusked rice) to prepare the community food, With a humble heart, we prey Allah to relieve us from the ravages of calamity, people invoke the aid of Sheik sana (a notable Muslim mystic of Iran) for stopping the torrential rains that played havoc with the standing crops).

During the times of natural calamities, which often caused the destruction of standing crops, people resorted to wild vegetable and the staple food, rice was substituted by *vath*[143], or *yaji*[144] and other economical food items. There are famous Kashmiri proverbs *"Zan chuk yaji chapan"* or *"Yaji chuk apravan"*, the first proverb is referred to a person who lacks mannerism and is devoid of behavioural decency and civility. The second proverb is used as a sarcastic remark against a person who tries to befoul others. Though this type of food has fallen in disuse now but it formed a popular dish of commoners during the periods of natural crises thanks are due to the folk literature which has the credit of having preserved the impression of this dietary item.

Vath, the half grinded corn was also used by common men when there occurred food scarcity due to failure or excessive rains. Though *vath* contained rich nutritious value, still it was considered to be the poorest dietary item in the food agenda of average Kashmiri. Even the bread made of wheat flour was unwillingly taken by common men as the substitute for rice. Taking of wheat floor bread (Kenka towachi) in place of rice was recognised as the symbol of extreme poverty and resourcelessness.

Kashmiris, as a general rule, preferred salt to sugar. *Nuna chai*[145] (salty tea) formed the popular drink of Kashmiris during the period of our study. There are scores of folk songs sung in praise of *Nuna chai* (salty tea) According to the literary accounts tea was imported from Sinkiang, Khoatan and other parts of Russo-Turkistan during the period of our study[146]. It constituted chief export item during the period under reference. According to the text of *chainana*, there were forty two kinds of tea, used in Kashmir. It was served in big nickeled copper *samavars*[147] and was taken twice a day. It worked no less an intoxicant for the poor Kashmiris, who groaned under the clutches of oppressive rulers. An average Kashmiris fondness for *Nuna chai* can be gleaned from this folk song, sung by village women when they return home from distant forests with a heavy load of firewood and the feed for their domestic cattle.

Wene āyes peky peky thekith[148]
Ghara vetith cheme nune chaī.
Kathe boren treves tehetith,
ghara vetith cheme nune chaī.
Kutchi peth wetch sērī semith
ghara vetith cheme nune chaī.

(I had gone to the distant jungle to bring feed for the cattle and the firewood,
I fully exhausted,
I am sure to get relieved of all discomfort,
If I take few cups of salty tea.
All family members are sitting together on the upper floor of the grain store,
enjoying the sips of salty tea,
I will feel relaxed, if I take few cups of salty tea).

Kashmiri villager preferred to be served with Kahwa (sugar tea) by his host when he visited to any near and distant relative, but in his own house, he would rarely like to have a drink of *kehwa*. It was mostly taken on festive occasions and on other

auspicious days by the common folk. The respectable families of Pirs, Khowajas (rais) and the Kashmiri Pandits preferred *kehwa* to an ordinary type of tea. These families often added saffron to *kehwa* to give it an additional flavour and colour. *Kehwa* constituted an important dietary item on marriage occasions and there are number of folk songs which are sung even today in praise of *kounnga kehwa*[149]. It was generally made and served in small *samovars*.

Qanda Sharbat was another drink Kashmiris were very fond of. It was severed to children on some auspicious occasions. Further during the month of *Ramadan*, the Muslims frequently took this drink keeping its energy and medicinal value. This is also attested by this verse of Kashmiri folk song.

> Powafe deydi qanda sharbat chawnowukh,
> mase deyedi kowachi lalenowukh tehei.
>
> (The sister of your father fed you with a
> delicious sweaty drink, (qanda sharbat)
> The sister of your mother brought you up
> with care and affection in her lap).

Different varieties of *anchar* also constituted a popular dietary item of Kashmiri food culture. Both the Hindus and Muslims were fond of using variety of pickles, relishes (chatnis) and flavour of different kinds. In villages *anchar* was taken as raw but in Srinagar, it was first fried in mustard oil and then taken. Jehangir also in his memoirs mentions the specialty of Kashmiri pickle. According to him, "the best pickle was that of garlic, because the garlic of Kashmir was very good.

10. Past times and recreation

The period under review, though, a witness to appalling heights of political oppression, the common folk true to their tradition and history adhered strictly to

Hatim Tilwani – famous story teller
Source: *Behind Hatim's Tales*

certain popular devises which provided the sunk and sullen Kashmiris a source for recreation and entertainment.

A careful review of folk literature reveals that during the months of extreme cold, when all passages for outdoor entertainment got paralyzed due to heavy snow fall, the only source of recreation left for Kashmiri people was to listen the adventurous romantic tales of Arabian nights, Persian heroes and tales of legendary heroes of ancient Kashmir[150]. There were professional story tellers whose services were sought to entertain the common folk, assembled together some where for the purpose[151]. This process continued for nights together until the story or tale reached to its end. The professional story tellers were in great demand and they were paid both in cash and kind. This perhaps may be main reason that why during the period of our study good number of Persian epics like "Shahnama" of Firdousi and other romantic tales like Gulrez, Yousouf Zuleikha, Laila Majnun were translated into Kashmiri language[152]. Stein, who compiled one of the prestigious collections of Kashmiri folk tales under the title of "Hatim's tales" acknowledges the proficiency of one story teller *Hatim Tilawani*[153] by name, from whom he heard these stories. Kashmiri village folk is said to forget their worries and agonies, caused by the corrupt revenue and police officials, and other exploiting agents, while being seated amid these recreational gatherings. In addition to the Persian oriented tales, local tales like *Aka nandun*[154], *Hemal Negrey*[155], *Bomber Yemberzal*, *Zohra Khatun* and *Hayabund* were also enjoyed by the local folk.

From the earliest times, Kashmiris had developed rich taste for theatrical performances. During the period under review, professional folk performers known as

Bhands[156] or *Bhagats* entertained people during harvest days and on the occasion of anniversaries of Sufi saints. Their humorous dramatic performances on fairs and festivals provided ample source for common folk to entertain themselves. These bhands performed folk plays known in Kashmiri language as *"Luke Pether"* in their peculiar costumes. Sources reveal that people flocked in numbers from distant places to enjoy these *pethers* (folk plays). These *Pethers* generally served two purposes, delight and information. These plays contained seemingly source of public entertainment but inwardly these *pethers* acted as pointers towards the official bunglings, oppression of feudal lords and the exploiting nature of the raj collaborators[157]. The in depth study of these *"Luke pethers"* tend us to suggest that in absence of the formal communicating agencies, these 'bhands' served as reliable informants for the "sarkar" by highlighting public grievances in a dramatic manner.

These bhands also exposed the exploiting devices of religious classes like Muslim Pirs and Pandit Brahmans. During the course of my M.Phil. programme, when I had a chance to see Mohd. Subhan Bhagat, he revealed to me that when the bhands expose the machinations of any member of corrupt officialdom or other exploiting agents, people sitting around shower abuses against the dramatic actors, taking them as the real characters. The louder laughter of village folk on comedian characters looks infact, a great satire against every exploiting section of the society, he revealed.Sir Walter Lawrence while conducting settlement work in the valley found that some of the plays enacted by the Bhands clearly depicted aggression of the ruling classes, over the masses, more particularly the agriculturists. "They", states Lawrence, "relieve the sadness of village life in Kashmir.

There was another source of recreation enjoyed equally by rural and city people. It was known as *Dambali*[158]. It was a combination of dance and the demonstration of material art. The "Damabi" was performed by a group of eight to fifteen professional dambalis known in vernacular as *Dambaly Faqir* or *Dambaly Mety*. The team of dambali performers was also received with extreme warmth and welcome. People rushed to the spot from the neighbouring villages to enjoy their dance and sling skills. Unlike Bhands, people held them in high esteem. It was believed as the tradition goes, that the performers of *dambaly* had been blessed with the baraka of local mystic saint. There arrival in the courtyard was taken[192] as a good omen by both men and women folk.

Another group of professional singers who were popularly known as shairs entertained village people particularly during harvest season. They often appeared with their rustic orchestra and began singing songs in praise of the respectable family or village elders. These shair are said to have been in the habit of composing their topical songs on spot. During my survey, I came across number of such shairs in Kulgam Tehsil but I was moved to see their sad plight. People now due to new means of recreation have lost all love and attraction for these movable human entertainers. In the words of Walter Lawrence:

> *"The shairs must be distinguished from the Bhaggats for they never act. They are either minstrels who sing to the accompaniment of a guitar, or the village poets, who suddenly spring up in the midst of business and recite in a loud shrill tone the praises of the most influential person present. I knew many of these poets, and have spent many hours listening patiently to the rhymes which seemed to have no end, and which jumbled up in a very curious manner .... It is good to give these poets a few rupees, for they are often miserable poor".*[159]

Lari shah or *laddi shah* (minstrel poet) was yet another folk entertainer. According to Prof. Mohi-ud-din Hajini "it (lari shah) has proved to be a source of mental consolation for the enslaved folk during the centuries past. *Lari shah* dressed in a peculiar costume with *dehra* (small iron rod with copper rings around it) would appear in peoples courtyards both in cities and villages and started reciting his literary compositions in a peculiar impressive tune on variety of socio-political themes. He usually directed his poetic criticism against the aggressive revenue officials, religious exploiters and anti-social elements like hoarders, profiteers and black marketers. People particularly children and women folk enjoyed his artistic company. Among other things his areas of artistic focus include multiple of natural calamities like floods, fires, droughts, famines and earthquakes Kashmiri folk literature is fortunate enough to have a rich treasure of this popular genre. Some of the important pieces of lari shahas which had a long role to play in the process of public entertainment during the period under survey include among others: *Buniyil Nama; Angrez Qanon, Bata Sowaqal, Mujwaza Nama, Aba drag*[160],etc. etc.

The Urs days of venerated Sufi and Reshi saints[161] round the year offered great opportunity for popular rejoice and pleasure. Apart from their spiritual relevance, these served as the great spots of public jubilation and recreation. In an environs conditioned by constant gloom and despair, the Urs days served as a recurring source of relief and consolation for other wise grief stricken people of Kashmir. Since there was a self imposed restriction on Kashmiri women to visit the Mughal gardens, the only way to enjoy the outdoor pleasure for Kashmiri women was to visit the shrines of Sufi saints on urs days. Besides being blessed by saints spiritual merit (as people

believed) the area around the shrines was crowded with jugglers, wrestlers, bhands and other charm performers, who amused people by their professional skills, wit and common sense. The man with domesticated bear and monkey also provided enough opportunity for commoners to enjoy themselves at these social gatherings.

In Srinagar city and in major towns of the valley, *Becha nagma*[162-A] also formed as one of the major source of public jubilation. Becha nagma marked the chief feature of Kashmiri marriage during the period under review. People hired the services of Kashmiri folk *chakri.*[162-B] Singers, who amused people by their musical melodies and child dance. These special musical parties were arranged particularly during the night hours. Elders, muscle men and people with sufina temperament formed the major chunk of listeners and viewers.

During the period under survey, the becha nagma was also arranged on festive occasions in the *Dungas* on the waters of famous Dal Lake. The institution served as an alternative for Hafiza dance[163] which was purely a domain of feudal elite and aristocracy. This is substantiated by the remarks of Florence Parbury who says that "the natives are very fond of a tamasha or fete, where they wear gorgeous clothes and sprinkle scent upon each other, and in Kashmir they often celebrate great occasions by a trip on the river. On one occasion we heard the beating of drums and strains of music skimming past our house boat, and on looking out saw a boat load of men in brilliant costumes"[164].

For aristocracy and feudal elite there happened to be professional musical clubs run by male sex brokers and prostitutes. There used to be two such main centres

dealing in sensual pleasure during the period under reference. One each at 'Maisuma' and *Tashvan* in Srinagar city[165]. In Anantnag district of Kashmir, near famous Achabal mughal garden, there also existed such centre, where a small garden is still remembered after the name of the lady manager of that recreational centre.

Among less expensive popular pastimes, mention may be made of *Kowaker jang jang* (cock fighting) *Dande ledey* (Bull fighting) and *koter vedav* (pigeon flying). Amidst political vandalism and economic distress, commoners took active participation in these outdoor pastimes. The popularity of the *dande ledey* can be deduced from this Kashmiri proverb.

"Srandan henzi ledayi manz chi gekhan zand lete mowanji"[166]

(In a fight between the two bulls the shrubs around get damaged).

Dangal (wrestling) was also one of the chief sources of public entertainment. The wrestlers often belonged to *Gury* (milk seller) families. Being in possession of well physical charm and strength, wrestlers belonging to Guri families often out shined their counterparts in the wrestling ring. In Srinagar city, according to contemporary sources, the wrestling bouts were usually arranged in the idgah ground. This wrestling bout in vernacular was known as *Pehlwan Dab Dab*. Another equally important muscle oriented game, which constituted a popular means of public recreation was *Lori Jang Jang*[167] (sling fighting). This folk game was played in streets and lanes. Sources reveal that during these fatal fights, dozen of rival participants would receive minor or major injuries which usually resulted in community clashes. Keeping in sight the fatal nature of the play, this game has now ceased to be the part of Kashmiri sports agenda.

It is evident from the context of the Kashmiri folk tales that from the distant times small girls in Kashmir amused themselves with variety of children's games. One such game or pastime, very popular among children was known by the name of Maharini Deji (toy bride). The toy marriage like amusing exercise is vividly depicted in this song.

Haī vesiye kot sanā llwakchar gō!
Yi nasā phīrith su mut lowakchar gō,
Yaad chuyi keni gindun meharen dejen?[168].
Shube vun lowat lowat su kot lowakchar go.

(O, my friend, do you ever recall your childhood days?)
I eagerly crave for its return.
Do you remember the sweet moments when we used to
play toy bride games?
How bewitching it was our childhood!';
But it faded so silently and unnoticed)

Being aware of the significance of physical fitness and mental soundness, Kashmiris amid poverty and exploitation, developed more taste for cheap sports activities rather than the big and expensive sports exercises. Their liking for less time consuming folk games is suggestive of their busy working schedule. During the period under reference, rural people from their very childhood either worked as bonded agricultural labourers on the lands of their absentee feudal lords, or worked as born debt industrial labourers in the clumsy factories of wealthy karakhandars in Srinagar city. Under such inhuman conditions, how could Kashmiris have developed taste and liking for games of royal and elite nature. Our historians have altogether marginalised the significance and the relevance of these games and that is why there

is no mention of these games in any of the historical narrative. These games help in understanding the soci-economic make-up and the aesthetic pulse of Kashmiri soviet.

The list of the folk games Kashmiris played with though very lengthy and comprehensive but here the reference may be made of only few games played during our period of our study. These were *Eny Katar, Kath Shahey Bam, Saza long, Garm, Okus Bokus, Yendre-mohul, Ate sewery Tsoori-Tchefi Lethy kij loth, Hiketh, Samandar Giry Bacha* etc etc [169]. These games were played exclusively by small children belonging to both the sexes.

The only game referred to above which was accompanied by rustic choral singing was Okus Bokus. Muslim women in Kashmir observed *Ramzan* with redoubled social gaiety and the religious zeal. They used to come out of their dwellings after breaking the fast and assembled together to sing in melodious tunes the *Rov* songs in praise of gallant Muslim heroes and local religious saints. The bounties of Allah, the glorious deeds of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the spiritual merits of Sufis and Rishis constituted the major content of these Rov songs. Kashmiri women folk often used this occasion to amuse themselves in the company of neighbouring ladies. These folk melodies coupled with balanced body rhythms of Kashmiri virgins would create a romantic sight in the secredotal backdrop of the Ramzan month. The month offered an outdoor exercise of enjoyment for otherwise confined Kashmiri virgins. The occasion was also used by Kashmiri Women to give spontaneous their expression to inner emotional feelings[170]. The month of *Ramzan* in Kashmir was not only observed in Kashmir as one of the fundamental duty enjoined

by the Quran on believers, but it had a tremendous bearing on the fair sex. About *Rov*, Walter Lawrence remarks as under:

> *"On festive occasions, the young women danced in groups in the form of semi circle, they sang pretty songs and their dance was graceful"*[171].

Though the dawn of winter (Vande) signaled the innumerable worries for an average Kashmiri, Yet owing to innate impulse for joy and jubilation, they turned the very occasion of first snow fall into a recreational exercise. A fun attached to this occasion is known as *shine sheret*. People would eagerly await for *nav shin* to befool their dear ones with the intention of getting a prize in kind of *Herisa*. Vigne has referred to this amusement as the Kashmiri equivalent of making one as "April Fool".

As *Becha nagma* constituted a popular mode of public amusement, so was the musical cum dance feats performed by beautiful Kashmiri Ladies a great source of mental and sensual consolation for elite and aristocratic class. The institution of 'Natuch girls'[172] was exclusively the state monopoly during the first phase of our period of study. It had been the practice of Sikh predecessors (Afghans) to spend nights in company of the natuch girls enjoying their music and dance. The Sikhs converted this aesthetic exercise to sensual heights. Commenting on the sad plight of natuch girls Hugel Writes:

> *"These poor creatures are doomed to a hard fate; they are not allowed either to sing or dance without permission, and if they get this, an officer of the government always accompanies them, who grasps, whatever* they *received".*[173]

According to Jacqumont

> *"The Sikh administrators off and on pleased and entertained their state guests by arranging dancing parties in decorated boats. About Kripa Ram, the Sikh governor there is a story in circulation among the Kashmiri folk that the peddlers of his official barge were always women. They dressed themselves in red uniforms, wore*

gungroes on their ankles and these ornaments produced harmonized musical sound shrony".[174]

It was because of this reason, says Lawrence that the Kashmiris who were expert in nickname had given him the sobriquet of 'Kripa Shroney'. Thus the folk expression "Kripa Shroney" presents the spectacular picture of the luxurious life style of the Sikh governing class.

Keeping in view the abundant water resources available in the valley in form of world renowned lakes, it was natural for Kashmiris to develop a taste for some kind of water games, but the only game we find reference to in our folk literature is the annual boating race held on Urs-i-Shahi-Hamdan at "Khanqa-hi-Maula". People in great numbers flocked to the spot to enjoy the feats of professional Kashmiri boatmen known in vernacular as *henz* (hanji). During the course of my visit to the area around the shrine, I met an aged lady, "Rahti" who sung for me this folk song which contains reference to this boat race. Few lines of the song are given for reference:-

Khanaqah chu mēle logmut,
Henzen chu bōsh khotmut,
Navan chi sheran nam,
Tehe kemiya dieutnai bram.
Khānqah chu mele logmut,
Hanzen chu bōsh khotmut,
Vethi bheti Tchelmnam gam,
Tohe kemiya dieutnai bram.

(The fair or mela at khanaqah is in full bloom)
The boatmen look intoxicated with pride and passion
They are busy in repairing the decks of their boats,
Don't fell slave to their bewitching skills
The fair or mela at khanaqah is in full bloom,

(The boatwomen look intoxicated with pride and passion our all worries and anxieties would lesson while enjoying the boating feat on the banks of river vitasta (Jehlum).

In addition to this, there were some other folk games in use during the period of our study as revealed by some elderly persons to me during the course of my survey. But I failed to find any reference regarding such games in any of the folk genre of Kashmiri. But the fact remains that these games constituted an important part of the children sports scheme during the period under review and served as a major source of child recreation and amusement. These games include among other activities *Razi gindun* (Rope play) Juf Taq (odd and even game) *Tanchi*[175] etc.etc.

An attentive examination of the oral sources reveal that Kashmiris possess an innate urge for creating situations which could provide enough chance even amid unfavourable circumstances for them to amuse and delight. This is evidenced by some of the folk expressions which dub Kashmiris as *Sele mety* and *Eshe mety* (amuse lover) The assertion is substantiated by the remarks made by George Forster, who visited the valley in the first half of the nineteenth century. TO quote him, "When a Kashmiri, even of the lowest order, finds himself in the possession of ten shillings, he looses no time in assembling his party and launching into the lake, solace himself till the lost farthing is spent"[176].

11. Fairs and Festivals

Celebrating fairs and festivals occupied a distinct place in the social life of Kashmiris. During the period under debate, it enabled the commoners at recurring intervals to find relaxation from the miseries and exacting toil of their sullen and struggling life. The collective behaviour pattern of Kashmiris of celebrating fairs and

festivals was generally governed by three important factors: Religio-cultural, social and political.

Governed by a set of traditional historical canons, our historians, chroniclers and other European travelers have applied the uniform scale for examining the underlying motive for holding different fairs and celebrating religious festivals by Kashmiris during the period under reference. But a careful examination of different genres of Kashmiri oral literature tend us to believe that Kashmiris intense urge to celebrate different fairs and festivals almost round the year was equally conditioned by the prevailing unfavourable political conditions. As is evident that the unique political system deprived an average Kashmiri of every means to protest against the ruthless behaviour of officialdom and the favourites of the rule. Finding themselves in an atmosphere of security and solace in the shrine environs, Kashmiris, without any fear of official secret agents, placed their heart felt grievances in the durbar of the dead Sufi saints for invoking their aid and help. This is evidenced from the contemporary literary works of eminent Kashmiri Sufi poets of the period. This perhaps could have been one of reasons for an average Kashmiris fondness for celebrating these fairs and festivals. The argument is further substantiated by the fact that Kashmiris had never shown jubilation on the festivals like Baisakhi or "Nauroz", instead Shivratri, and Idd Festivals and the periodical fairs held at different Sufi and Rishi Shrines (in case of Muslims) and fair at *"Khir Bhawani"*[177] at Tulmul near Ganderbal by Kashmiri Pandit Community, were observed with more religious zeal and traditional social fervour and gaiety.

The period under survey was witness to the worst kind of ravages caused by recurring natural calamities like floods famines, Earthquakes and fires,[178] but the innate desire of the people to find the avenues to relieve them of their pains did not deter them from celebrating these fairs and festivals. According to Walter Lawrence "Fairs held at the Shrines annually were red latter days in the dull lives of the Muslim[179]. The major religious festivals of the Muslims in Kashmir were Id-ul-Fitr, (Lowakat Idd) *ID-ul-Azha*, (Bed Idd) *Voarsi Nabi* (Id-i-Milad) *Shab-i-Barat*, *"Shab-i-Qadar"*, *"Meraj-u-Nabi* and *Muharam*.

Lowaket Idd and *Bed Idd* constituted two major occasions of mass jubilation in Kashmir. The melodious echo of *Rov* songs by Kashmiri women in the backdrop of panoramic sites made these occasions look more colourful, romantic and majestic. For example, see these *Rov* songs.

Īdd ayi chumy shedyyane,[180]
Āyi Parav esy Qurana
OR
Esy karav qurban bed idd ayi,
Shukr khowadai shukr khowadai

(The crescent of the Idd had been sighted)
Let us assemble friends- we will recite
in melodious tunes the injections of the Quran)

(The idd-ul-zuha had come,
Let us celebrate it by slaughtering sacrificial lamb).

The sisters in their husbands houses used to wait eagerly their brothers for presenting the idd gift in cash or in kind. On these occasions invitations were extended to sisters and their husbands by their brothers to share sumptuous meals with them immediately after the idd.

The fourteenth night of "Shaban" (8th month of Hijri calendar) observed with religious fervour by the Muslims of the valley. While men folk engaged themselves in the recitation of the Quran and other religious exercises in the local mosques, women folk took recourse to the singing of *Rov* songs, highlighting the spiritual merits of great Islamic heroes and other mystic saints. In the dead of the night, men folk visited the graves of their dead ancestors to offer *Fatiah* for the consolation of their souls in the eternal world. People also illuminate their houses with *"Tehengy zool"* to mark this festival.

In true spirit of the Quranic revelations, the Muslims of the valley in the intervening might of 26th and 27th of "Ramzan" celebrate the festival of "Shab-i-Qadar" with great religious devotion and fervour. Muslim men folk spend their whole might in the local mosques in offering special 'Ramzan prayer known as *taravij* and reciting the Quran and other religious texts. During all along the sacred night, the devotes are served with variety of sweet and salty food items like, 'halwa' 'Phirni', 'Sharbat' and 'nuna chai' (salty tea). During the period under debate Muslim women all along the night would sing festive songs in praise of the "Ramzan" as revealed in the Quran. For example

Retan manz reth kusei jān,
Shubavun Māhi Ramzān
Yi hai ōs Nabi sēb jān,
Shūbuvan Māhi Ramzān[181].

(None of the month of Muslim calendar excels in merit to the month of Ramzan,
The truth stands that the last Nabi (Muhammad) P.B.U.H was an embodiment of unmatched decency and merit).

On *Idi-Milad-u-Nabi*, a prestigious religious congregation was held at the Dargah Hazratbal Shrine, which housed the sacred relic of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The exhibition of the sacred relic before the devotees after five prayers a day marked the chief feature of the occasion. People both men and women flocked to 'Hazratbal' to be blessed with the sight of the sacred relic. They used to stay either in the *dungas* or in the houses of the local shrine attendants called "Mujjavirs", against the payment. People assembled, also took liberty to enjoy the boat rowing on the water of the 'Dal Lake'. In addition to these festivals, the Urs celebrations on the death or the birth of the foreign or local saints and rishis also constituted the major means of social get together. Some of the celebrated saints on whose birth days, fairs were held with great social fervour and religious devotion include among others: Sheikh Nur-ud-din at tchrar, Shaik Makhdoom Hamza at Srinagar, Khanqah-i-Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Khanqah-i-Dastageer Sahab Khanyar. Following verses of Kashmiri folk songs present a vivid picture of these socio-religious oriented fairs held at different Sufi or Rishi Shrines. For example.

i) Nūr dīn sēbs tes alamdārs,[182]
Jay yemy retnum manz tehraras.
Su hai chum tety yey beti tury larars,
Baras vomatas shana daras,
Baras vomatas shana daras.

ii) Makhdūm sebun khasi letyye[183]
su chu ēli shān.
Teti ber haui chī vethy ye,
Neri letiye rovy karān.

iii) Dastagir sebeni janteky tham tai,[184]
Num tai Rasuli khawadayes.

i) (Sheikh Nur-ud-din who is acknowledged by the folk as the torch beaver, selected his abode at tchrar,
There is no option left to us but to rush to his shrine at Tchrar.

ii) Oh, friend, have a visit to the hillock of Hari parbat
The spot is blessed with the tomb of Mukhdoom Sahab
The doors are open for devotees to receive saints baraka
(Let us move collectively in a jubilant mood to visit the shrine).

iii) (The decorated wooden pillars in the shrine of Dastgir Sahab, look no less in grandeour than the pillars in heaven)
The deeds of the believers ought to be in tune with the deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H).

In the words of Arthur Neve

> *"The urs days of different saintly sites formed the happiest days for sick and sullen Kashmiris:. People from all parts of the valley attended the fairs particularly those celebrated at Hazratbal."*[185].

At Hazratbal Shrine, during the course of the year, five or six fairs were held and on all these days, the sacred hair of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was displayed before viewers who would come from far flung areas of Kashmir. Dr Arthur presents his impressions regarding Hazratbal fair in the following words.

> *"There are the great days to which the people, especially women and children look keenly forward; for not only is there the display at the shrines, but the opportunity of showing of their best clothes and jewellery and of seeing the shops of the city and making their frugal purchases. A bundle on the man's back contains few days rice and ... the wife carried a fat cock as a present to the moulavi (religious pir). The same feeling is expressed in the following Rov song of Kashmiri language."*

Mele logmut chu Hazratbal lōlō,[186]
Dedy ladenei dōd teti bali lōlō,
Mele logmut chu Hazrat bala lolo
Lola prārān ashiq chi didaras,
Gah loluk peu bedi dala lōlō,
Mele logmut chu Hazratbal lōlō.

(The fair at Hazratbal is in full bloom,
The ailments of the sick would be cured there,
The fair at Hazratbal had begun,
The devotees eagerly want to have the glimpse
of the sacred relic,
The entire Dal Lake has been illuminated with
the light of the sacred hair).

Muharam is the first month of Muslim calendar. The great sacrifice presented by Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) on the historic dessert of 'Karbala' along with some of his family members and other companions is being celebrated with a sad note by the members of the Muslim Shia community all over the Muslim world. This day as else where, in Kashmir too, was observed with great commotion by the Shia Muslims of Kashmir.

Mourning processions and 'marsiya khawani marked the chief features of this Muslim sensitive festival. Contrary to the mourning gestures of shia people, the Sunni Muslims would make it a point to see that their children are well fed on that day. They believed that the martyrdom of Hazrat Hussain at Karbala was a great service to the noble cause of Islam. The same state of mind is expressed in this verse of Kashmiri folk mersiya:

Rete sety sag yemy diut Islamas,[187]
Zu chepi tas shehzadas lō,

[He (Hussain) who offered his blood for the glory of
Islam, I offer my youth for this celebrated prince]

During this month of 'Muhram', Kashmiri Muslims suspended all their social engagements, marriage ceremonies and other auspicious functions. The mourning processions carried by the members of Shia community through the streets of Srinagar often resulted in the outbreak of Shia-sunni conflicts during the period of

our study. Though we don't find reference about these conflicts in our folk literature but the literary sources abound in such details. The sketches of the social composition of Kashmiri society reveal that these clashes and tensions were responsible for weakening the social ties between the two Muslim communities. There hardly lasted any love between the members of the two communities during our period of study.

Kashmiri Pandits who are known for their religious and ritualistic make up celebrated number of fairs and festivals of their own. These included among others, Shivratri, Ramanavmi, Navreh, Janam ashtami, etc. etc.

The most celebrated festival Kashmiri Pandits observed was Shivratri, popularly known as 'Herat'. Special religious audiences, recitation of mantras and the texts from the Gita marked the chief feature of this religious festival of Kashmiri Hindus. The next day following the Shivratri is termed as *salam*. On this day the Muslims would go to their Hindu friends for Herat salutation. The Hindu daughters received colourful gifts from their parents this day. The married daughters were presented with special type of decorated Kashmiri *Kangri* as a token of love by their parents. The following folk song gives the graphic picture of occasion.

Shiv nāths pūza kerevey
Bēāi berney beniney lōl,
Posh thalan shivas beruey,
Beni berney bhayan lōl,
Param shivas pūza kereney.
Sone kangri rowani deshi kerney,
Bei berney beniney lōl[188]

(Let us prey to shiv with love and devotion,
Sisters crave to see their brothers with
shivratri gifts,

We will adore the image of lord shiva with floral offerings,
Lord Shiva blesses his devotees tonight.
Let us decorate our golden colour kangri
With the delicate jingling bells,
Sisters crave to see their brothers coming with shivratri gifts).

Fish formed the necessary dietary item on this occasion. The sumptuous special food prepared on the day was generally termed as *Herat gada bata.*

Another important festival observed by Kashmiri Pandits was known by the name of '*Ramanavmi*' Kashmiri Pandits, wore colourful clothes and visited number of temples dedicated to Lord Rama.

Janam ashtami was also celebrated with religious fervour and devotion. The ceremonial procession, projecting the heroic deeds of Lord Krishna marked the special features of the festival.

Rakhi or Raksha Bhandan was another festival celebrated by Kashmiri pandits. On this day sisters tied rakhis on the wrists of their brothers against a cash gift.

With the outset of winter all out door recreational pursuits for Kashmiris would come to a sudden halt. The major section of agricultural class and urban industrial labour would leave dwellings and children and moved to distant places of undivided Punjab to seek livelihood for the sustenance of their family members[189]. The long chilly winter nights with redoubled domestic needs and less economic resources prompted Kashmiri men and women folk to labour hard from dawn to dusk under the faded light of earthen lamps to earn the meek livelihood for their children. Weaving of blankets, mats, doing embroidery work on shawls and spinning of wheels

formed the chief indoor occupations of Kashmiris during the days of *chilei kalan* (period of extreme cold). The snow frozen slippery lanes, passages and streets restricted the commoners movements within their rustic mud dwellings. With no suitable provision to let the fresh air in, Kashmiris often fell victims to variety of infectious dreaded diseases that caused great loss of life during the period under reference. Under these uncongenial climate conditions Kashmiris always craved for the arrival of 'Sont, or 'Bahar' (spring season). Sont or Bahar for an average Kashmiri was nothing less than rebirth or new life. To give a majestic ceremonial welcome to this season, Kashmiris had developed a unique scheme of mass jubilation known in vernacular as "Badam vari mela." The fair during the period under debate was first held at the foot of the Shankeracharya hillock on the Dal-rim and the latteron the venue was changed to the almond gardens situated on the southern bank of famous Nigen Lake. Kashmiri artisan class showed extra interest to celebrate this seasonal festival of Kashmir. People flocked in colourful dresses with *samavars* and mats and engaged themselves with the eating of burnt waternuts available there on the banks of the Nigen Lake". There are scores of song in Kashmiri folk literature composed on the theme of *Badam vari mela.* For example:

Phulei legmetch chi Badāmvari,[190]
Bihith bulbul chi daryen peth,
Daban nazan chikya ache dari,
Bihth bul bul chi daryen peth.

(Almond flower are in full bloom in badam vari,
Bulbuls are silently sitting on their window sides,
Kashmiri women look very beautiful seated on their balconies,
Bulbuls are sitting silently on their window sides.

The most colourful national festival known as *vethi truveh* was celebrated with traditional zeal during the period under reference. According to the Hindu tradition it was this day on which the river vitasts (Jehlum) found its course from 'Anantnag' to 'Baramulla'. The festival was held on the thirteenth day of the moon which according to local legend was commemorated as the source of the vitasta (Jehlum) was supposed to have been created by Siva. According to the ancient custom, the Jehlum in its course through the city and the chief towns was illuminated with lamps on both its banks. This festival was equally celebrated by all sections of Kashmiri society irrespective of religion, caste and community. The panoramic view is portrayed in this folk songs, also.

Vethi hund agur kya nundabonei,[191]
Sadav yī sir zoneye.
Tchangyen hund gah chus shubeni,
Zoone gashe ten chus shile podmeni.

(The source of the river vitasta presents a spectacular view,
The secret of its source has been comprehended by saints and seers only.
The dazzling reflection of illuminating candles present a romantic sight.
Its body in a moon lit night looks nothing less than a maiden's beauty).

Another seasonal festival observed by Kashmiri pandits was *'Naureh'* (new years day). The tradition runs that the day is observed to commemorate the drain of flooded water. Pandits used to throw ceremonial offerings in the river vitasta to please the goddess of water. Special religious audiences were held in the Hindu families to commemorate this day.

12. Customs, Rituals and Ceremonies Relating to Birth and Death

Customs, rituals and sites related to birth, death and marriage ceremonies performed by multitude of individuals in a particular social organisation are

primarily the folk expressions of the established set of behavioural patterns of the people conditioned by socio-religious schemes[192] In other words, these basically refer to those folk ways that persist over relatively long periods of time so as to attain a degree of formal recognition and to be passed down from one generation to another. Borgardus define them as group accepted techniques of control that have become well established, taken for granted and are passed along from generation to generation[193]. According to Anderson and Parker customs are those uniform approved ways of acting we fallow and which are transmitted from generation to generation by tradition and usually made effective by social approval"[194]. From the above definitions, it seems plausible to dub these practices relating to multiple of socio-religions pursuits as the biggest repository of the social heritage. These variegated practices in tradition offer on objective insight into the behavioural patterns, distinctive collective mentality and the psycho-ethical make up of a particular society.

Kashmiri folk literature presents a colourful and dramatic picture of different customs, rituals and ceremonies observed by common Kashmiris on different socio-religious occasions. Here we give a brief description of some practices referred to in our folk literature.

12(a). Customs and ceremonies relating to birth among the Muslims.

Inspire of Kashmiri transition to Islam during the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the Kashmiri Muslims retained some of the age old impressions which constituted the ceremonial scheme and calendar of Kashmiri Pandits. For example, contrary to the Quranic revelations which do not permit any discrimination on the

basis of gender, in Kashmiri Muslim families, the birth of the female baby was not looked with so warmth, joy and rejoice as it was shown at the birth of a male child. This is evidenced from different Kashmiri *menzely beth* (cradle song) which generally made male children the object of special appreciation. I have found only an insignificant number of cradle songs, which admire the beauty of a female baby. The same feeling is expressed in these cradle songs,

Zū vendei pakh sā,
Shūsh vendei pakh sā.
Nika lalō pakh sa,
Khand to nābad Tekhsā[195].

(How beautiful it looked, when you started walking,
I offer to sacrifice my precious life to you)
(You gladly chew several and sugar cakes).

The same rejoice was shown by Kashmiri Pandits at the birth of the male babies. The state of pandit ladies happiness is depicted in this Kashmiri "manzely beth" sung by Kashmiri Pandit women.

Vala vala Rajō kowali vuzi ponī,
Sebeni zene āv vethi vethe vōni.
Zatuk lekni ay suru gowāsēni.

(With your birth, there began to flow fresh water in brooks,
Your birth, my son, caused enough water to gush out from
the source of river vitasta.
A seasoned priest has come to prepare your horoscope)

Both Muslims and the Hindus sought the help of an elderly skilled lady known as *dei* or wareny to conduct the safe delivery of a pregnant lady. Immediately after the birth of a baby in case of the Muslim, Azan was aired in the ear of a baby.

Kane tele bhāng kemiya ditchenai-?
Maman ditchenei Maman ditchenai.

(Who recited azan in your ear at your birth?

It was your maternal uncle, It was your maternal uncle).

It was customary on the part of every Kashmiri Muslim lady to deliver the maiden baby in their parental home. On the seventh day after the delivery, the mother of the baby was bathed with a hot water, added to it, some herbal medicines. On this day a special meal was served to the near relatives and among the close neighbours. The function was known as 'Sowander'.

The period of confinement varied among the Pandits and the Muslims. In case of Muslims, it was observed for eleven or twelve days, but in case of Muslim, the period of confinement lasted for forty day. On fortieth day the mother of the boy was given a hot bath and the relatives of her husband were given a sumptuous feast. Muslims regarded the women as an unfit for the performance of religious duties like the daily worship during these forty days. Before extending formal invitation to the daughter-in-law to come back to her husband's house, *piaw* was sent to the mother of the baby, which include special Kashmiri *bekir khawnies* (bread) mew cloths for the baby and the mother and some cash amount as a delivery gift. The ceremony is portrayed in a picturesque way in this folk song.

Peau onenei hashi tai heran[196],
Cowanei heran vasan chak.
Nike chuye kowatchi kowatchi pheran,
Lowati heran wason chak.

(O, daughter, your father-in-law and mother-in-law have come with the peau- the delivery gift,
You are stepping down cautiously to see your husband's parents.
The new born is being carried from lap to lap,
You are stepping down cautiously to see your husband parents).

Another equally important rejoicing moment relating to birth ceremony was the first cutting of the hair known in vernacular as *zere kaseni.* It was generally conducted at the lawns of some Sufi shrine particularly at the shrine of Nur-ud-din at Chrar or in the picturesque lawns of Hazratbal Shrine. This was an occasion of great rejoice particularly in case of a male baby.

Techrar khasav bedidoh nikaszara kesav,
Nikas zara kasav.
Muqam khasav bedidoh, nikaszara kasev
Nikas zara kasav.

(Let us march towards tchar (shrine of Sheikh Nur-ud-din)
The annual Urs days have begun,
We will shave the head of the new born there.
Let us move towards 'Muqam; (the shrine of Baba Zain-ud-din)
the annual urs days have begun,
We will shave the head of the new born there).

In case of female children next to *zare kaseni* there was the ceremony of piercing the ear-lobs to enable them to wear ear rings. This was usually done between the age of four and five years. On this occasion relatives and friends were invited and entertained the dinner or tea depending mostly on the status and resources of the family.

The most significant ceremony observed in case of a Muslim male child was known and is still known as *khatanhal* or *khutna* (circumcision). It is an obligatory practice according to Islamic 'Sharia' and it is binding upon rich and poor parents to undertake the khatanhal of their male children. It was usually performed from three to eight years of child's age. It formed an occasion of great rejoicing and get together. During the period of our study the circumcision (Khatanhal) was effected by professional barbers and hakeems. In the following Kashmiri folk song, the local

surgeon (barber) is being cautioned to undertake the job attentively and seriously. For example.

Woastei kēro kar khabar dēri,[197]
Sani gari chei woamed veriye.

(O, surgeon you are cautioned to be serious to your job,
Gifts await in abundance for you).

12(b). Customs and ceremonies relating to birth among Kashmiri Pandits.

In a set of Hindu customs and rituals relating to the birth of the child, the special ceremony observed at the post delivery stage occupied the prominent position. Few days after the delivery particularly on *sowander* day, the ladies of the neighbourhood would assemble around the confined lady with a special pot like jar, filled with birch bark and a glass full of water kept near by. While reciting certain mantras, the ladies gathered, put some pieces of birch bark in the fire pot (kangri) and then dip it into the water. During all this course, the elderly ladies would sing in a distinctive tune and style an oldest category of folk songs known in Kashmiri as *Berze metchi Hendy Beth*[198], where in the aid of the Hindu ditties was sought for the safety and the security of the new born baby and the mother. The following song intends to seek the same aid of the muse deity.

Huri raza,
Bakeshy nam,[199]
Khema kerynam,
Sahayetas rozynam,
Khowash nirnam,
Shad nerynam.
Rezy esunam,
Shoq te ponson.

(I beg Hury Raja for pardon,
I am sure that he will support us at our back,

He should leave the house with a happy note.
Let his help bless us with abundance of love and money).

During our period of study in the third or the fourth day of the delivery, a ceremony locally known as "Trui" was observe. On this day a special type of food containing all nutritious ingredients like sesamum, kernels of walnuts, almonds and sugar was fried in oil and distributed among friends and relatives. The mother who till date slept on raw grass mating was allowed to use the usual bed. From sixth to eleventh day after delivery, the confined lady was to take semi purificatory bath (firth bath). On this day, a special ceremony known as *sowander* was also held. Confined lady wore new clothes and the new born was also dressed in new baby clothes.

On the eleventh day another purificatory ceremony called as *kah nethar*[200] was held. Until this day the confined mother was treated as impure or untouchable. On this day she was put on special bath and the hot water used for the purpose was added with some folk medicines to give it a medicinal touch. Well off Hindu families also performed Havan on this day. According to a tradition, the mother of the infant was said to take five ingredients or products of the cow, cow milk, curd, butter, ghee and calf's urine. These products were called *Pancha-caria.* once the ceremony was over, the astrologers would cast the child's zatuk or horoscope.

A special get together was arranged in honour of the priest cum astrologer who was called to effect a zutuk for the child. This ceremony is conveyed in this baby folk song.

Zatuk lekhni av sure Gonaseni[201]
Vala vala rayō kowali vuzi pōnī.
Zatukis chi thedy balō[202]
Ho kareyo the kerō

(A celebrated astrologer had been incited to prepare the zatuk (horoscope),
Your birth had effected abundance of water in the river vitasta.
Documenting the horoscope of a new born is not so simple a task; It needs specialty and skill,
We hold you in high reverence O, Thakur-the beautiful worshipping image)

The first hair cut of the child was an occasion of rejoice and delight particularly in case of male issue. Like Muslims of the valley, the Hindus also prefer to hold this function outdoors in some temple associated to their particular family deities. A perusal of the Kashmiri folk songs as sung on the occasion indicate that the custom is very old and is said to have originated in the sutra age.

One of the most important ceremony relating to birth was and is the Yagnopavit (mekhal ceremony). According to the text of the tradition it is a ceremony invested with religious sanctity and is treated as the sign of the second or spiritual birth and initiation into Hinduism. Without this the 'Brahman is not looked upon as a perfect in the caste. It constituted as one of the most important series of socio-religions ceremonies conducted in Kashmiri Pandit families. Fun, rejoice and music on the religious ceremonies marked the chief features of the occasion. Sumptuous vegetarian meal was arranged in the honour of the invited guests on this occasion. According to Samskara it is the prime duty of the head of the family to arrange the meekhla ceremony of their child or children at the appropriate age.

Another ceremony known by the name of Vidhya raja[203], ceremony was also held in a very learned manner. On this day, a boy or girl was guided for the first time

towards educational pursuit. Any learned man of the family or a family priest was invited to initiate this exercise. Since Kashmiri Pandits were conscious of the educational merit, they left no stone unturned to guide their children to achieve new heights in the academic domain. Kashmiri cradle songs song by Kashmiri Pandit women bear testimony to this fact. In a big chunk of Kashmiri cradle songs, the pandit mother usually asks blessings for child's health and education. In other forms of Pandit *wanvun* also, the dire desire of the parents that their children be gifted with the merit of Gyan (education) is expressed so very frequently. For example:

Ved resti shiva ved vowamkaru,
Sukhdev, Te Vyas chī ved vakhnan

[Nothing excels knowledge in merit
I pray that sukhder and vyas (gods of learning)
unfold before you my child, the treasures of knowledge]

12(c). Death ceremonies performed by Kashmiri Muslims.

The death of any member in the Muslim family in Kashmir was mourned with wailing and loud weeping. The male members hardly expressed their sadness in words as the tragic event is attributed to the Gods proposal. Male members generally maintained gloomy but dignified silence. Unlike Kashmiri Pandit ladies, Muslim ladies resorted to beating of chests, tearing of cloths and weeping loudly on the death of the dear ones. Contrary to this Kashmiri pandit ladies recited a special category of folk song known in vernacular as *van* on the death of any elderly relative. The entire gamut of Hindu rituals, customs and rites connected with death of a Hindu is expressed in a sequential manner in different Kashmiri *Van* songs.

Muslims of Kashmir performed ceremonies on the death of a family members in line with the Quranic spirit and the 'sunnah'. The body is washed with a luke warm water and is wrapped in a white new cloth known as *Kafan*. It is then put in a wooden box known as *Tabud* and is carried either to the mosque or near by spot, usually Jinazagah, where the special prayer known as Jinaza is read in a nimaz pose under the leadership of a local imam or any member of the family well versed is the Quranic text. After the burial of the dead body, the mourners come back and a simple tea is served prepared by the close by neighbours. No meal is prepared in the bereaved family for three consecutive days. During all the three days relatives and neighbours manage their meals. On the fourth day known as Tchurium, special prayer meeting is conducted at the grave yard, where the Quranic verses are rendered for the benefit of the deceased soul. On this day in rural Kashmir, the bereaved family arranges a social get together and the people present are fed with variety of local dishes. In Srinagar and adjacent areas, instead of *Turium*, the Muslims, generally organised function of socio-religious nature on the Friday after Friday congregations. Muslims under the leadership of local "Molvi" offer special prayers known as *Jumma Fateh.*[204] On their return to home of grieved family, people gathered are served with a cup of tea with special Kashmiri bread.

On the fortieth day, during the period under review a semi religious sitting under the supervision of local imam was held, which is known in Kashmiri language as *khatm-i-sharief*. People present, recited the Quranic verses and invoke the aid of Sufi saints for granting peace for the soul of the deceased.

12(d). Death ceremonies of Kaskmiri Pandits.

The ceremonies performed at the time of death of a Hindu were and continues to be as follow:

The body of deceased person is washed with warm water and wrapped in a piece of new cloth. A little ceremony is performed outside the house. The body is then placed on a plank and carried to the cremating ground on the shoulders of four men. This task is considered to be of a great honour, and they therefore, change places frequently when the followers are many and the journey short on the way to the cremating ground.

The funeral pyre is usually lighted by the son of the dead. The cremation is performed by a Kashmiri Muslim called as *kavejy* against payment in cash as well as in kind. Those bones which are not consumed, by the fire are, two days latter, brought to the home and left in a hole in the wall until the day of ganga ashtami, when they are taken by the eldest son to the holy lake under the mountain Harmukh and cost in.

For ten days the house of the deceased is regarded as unclean and no one takes food from the kitchen of the bereaved. On the tenth day a special ceremony is performed on the river bank, water is sprinkled and balls of rice offered. On this day the eldest son have to shave his beard and head. At the end of the ten days of active mourning the son or the sons of the deceased receive new dresses from his or their father -in-laws which they put on. As they approach the house, the mourners cue themselves in two parallel opposite lines and the elder son of the deceased enter his house passing through the standing cue of the mourners. The mourners then take

their leave. Like birth or marriage in a Hindu family, death is also regulated by multiple of ceremonies. A special category of mourning Kashmiri songs *Vaan* (associated with Kashmiri Pandits only) documents the entire set of Hindu ceremonies celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits on the death of their dear ones. In the words of Pearce Gervis "death to the orthodox Hindu has no fears for he believes in reincarnation; there is but the sorrow at parting from his loved ones, and generally parents shower all their love on their children whom they seldom seem to scold when young, husband and wife in an arranged marriage being only bound by them".

Among Muslims, *Pirs* or *Mullahs* who were called to conduct the different socio-religious ceremonies had adopted number of innovative devices to fleece the ignorant and superstitious Kashmiri Muslims. Their corrupt practices during the period under reference have been portrayed by nineteenth century famous Kashmiri poet Maqbool Shah Kralwari in his poem entitled "Pir Nama". For example:

Chi nāhaq yīra kerymety pīre nāvān[205],
Chi gumrah pāna woth kas vante hāvān.
Vechun kuni Jāyi yowad piumut bemāra,
Parān Hamdā zi lowag zālas Shikarā.

(They (pirs) feel proud of their rich pedigree,
How a misled person is expected to act as leader?
If by chance they catch sight of a sick person,
They feel pleased that a prey had been caught in net).

Even at present there are some folk sayings in circulation which are indicative of the corrupt practices of the two religious classes- *Pirs* or *gors*. For example.

"Pirs che ponsech zir"
OR
"Gor Chu ponses lor".

Both these expressions contain the same meaning that *"Pir"* or *"Gor"* know how to grab money. Oral sources reveal that" Pirs and Gors" were given lavish gifts in cash and in kind for conducting variety of ceremonies referred to in the foregoing pages. This is also suggested from the folk song in which the machinations of the Pandit "Gors" are made subject of ridicule and indignation. For example:

Gors zangan legith nōr,
Nenun piyomut tas chui tor[206]
Marnas zenes asan lōr,
Khei khei tchotnas vowadani, chōr.

(Dressed in a tight/trouser, the Gor (priest)
is always found in search of an event or
occasion that promises him sumptuous
feast and cash reward.
Death or birth provides him equal chance to
earn money,
Yes, it is the over diet that caused him an
intestinal disorder.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Quoted by Peter Burke ***"History and Social Theory"***, p.16
2. Davis, Kingsley, ***Human Society***, p.397.
3. Nazir, ***"Keshir Dapety"***, p.207, Atish, G. N. ***Kashmiri Folk Songs,*** Vol.9, p.87.
4. This folk song was sung for me by Zoona of Pohu, Pulwama (unpublished)
5. P.N. Bazaz, ***"Daughters of Vitasta"***, P. Bamzai, *"History of Kashmir"*, p.
6. During any field survey, this song was recited to me by Azi an aged lady at Palhalan Pattan.
7. M. L. Saqi, "***Kashmiri Folk Songs***", Vol.3, p.128.
8. Dost Muhammad and A.Salam, "*Kashmiri Family life*" unpublished paper.
9. M. L. Saqi, "***Kashmiri Folk Songs***", Vol.11, p.54.
10. Unpublished folk song gathered from a young lady named Amina from Chadura, Panzan.

10(a). Saqi, M.L Op.Cit. Vol.4, p.128.

11. Dost Muhammad and Salam, Op.Cit.
12. G. N. Atish, "***Kashmiri Folk Songs***", (Kashmir) Vol.VIII pp.120-121.
13. **Ibid.,** p.128.
14. Nazir, "***Keshir Depity***", p.98.
15. Lundberg, "***Sociology***", p.133.
16. **Ibid.,** p.133.
17. Horton and Hunt, "***Sociology***", p.216.
18. H. T. Muzumdar, "***Grammar of Sociology***", p.582.
19. Farooq Fayaz, *"Women in Kashmiri Folklore"*, paper presented in National Seminar Organised by Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir.
20. This is a common folk expression addressed by parents to their daughters the time of their departure,.

21. this folk saying carries the same meaning but the diction varies as the two are uttered by people belonging to two different communities Hindus and the Muslims respectively.

22. Saqi, Op.Cit. p.335.

23. In almost all "***Wanvun***" songs (marriage songs) we find undertone protest against the family elders for getting the girls married at a tender age. Also see "***Kashmir Under the Sikhs***", D.C.Sharma, p.62. Bazaz, ***Daughters of Vitasa***, pp.212-215.

24. These songs I collected from a lady at Bandipora. But she refused to reveal her name for the reasons best known to her.

25. **Ibid.**

26. **Ibid.**

27. Gathered from oral recordings of different eminent personalities, preserved in the Radio archives of Radio Kashmir Srinagar.

28. Saqi, Op.Cit,, p.242.

29. **Ibid.**

30. **Ibid.**

31. In a male dominating society, the daughter-in-law was required to perform multiple of domestic assignments from dawn to dusk. Hence, through investigations were made regarding the health of the supposed daughter-in-laws.

32. ***Khana damad*** or resident son-in-law is a man who marries the daughter of a proprietor and instead of taking the girl away to his own house, lives on with her in her father's house, performing services for him (father-in-law) and helping to manage his property. His wife is called ***khana nashin*** daughter. For details see Ganjoo, N.K., *"Customary Law of Kashmir"*. Also refer A.A. Hussain ***"Customary Succession Among Muslims"***, p.175.

33. **Ibid.**, p.178.

34. Walter Lawrence, ***"Valley of Kashmir"***, p.267. For details see *"Some Aspects of Corve*, M.I . Khan, paper published in Research Bi-annual also see M.S.Bhagat ***"Koshur Luka Theatre"***, pp.42-43.

35. A. A. Ahangar, Op.Cit. 178.

36. Lawrence, Op.Cit., p167.

37. J. H. Knowls, ***"A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings"***, p.167. Nazir, ***"Keshir Depety"***, p.165.

38. In Kashmir, a go between known as "**Manzimyor** arranges marriage of the boy and the girl. This role is generally performed either by an aged lady or elderly person or by **launches.** Their role usually ends when the couple gets married. According to Lawrence, "the manzimyors most lucrative .work consists in bringing off matches between wealthy parvenus and old decayed families", ***Valley***, p.261.

39. It symbolises the every pleasing occasion. It is ball shaped sugar object which is regarded as a good omen for every plausible act. It is frequently exchanged through manzimyor between the two contracting parties.

40. *"Bacha nagma"* (dance performed by a beautiful boy) is said to have originated during the Afghan rule in Kashmir (1753-1819). It acted as one of the important recreational means during the period of our study. During the Sikh period the institution reached to its height (1819-1846).

41. It marked the part of the marriage procession. During the night the lighted mashaliys presented spectacular view and the marriage procession would look more impressive and majestic.

42. G. N. Atish, "***Keshir Luka Beth***", Vol.IX, p.87.

43. G. N. Atish, "***Keshir Luka Beth***", Vol.VIII, pp.167-177.

44. Pardesi, Sadhu, ***Keshir Luka Beth***, Vol.VII. pp.165-177.

45. *Koshur khander Gewun*, Cultural Academy pp.

46. **Ibid.**

47. **Ibid.**

48. **Ibid.**

49. **Ibid.**

50. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.96.

51. Jowhar, R.L. "***Keshir Luka Beth***", (***Kashmiri Folk Songs***) Vol.X. p.87.3

52. Shad, Ramzan ***"An Anthology of Kashmiri Folk Songs"***, p.107.

53. Even after mass conversion to Islam during fourteenth and fifteenth century, Kashmiri Muslims Continued to retain certain age old Hindu customs and the custom of adoption is one among such customs. According to Hindu

mythology, the spirit of a dead person remains restless for some days round his worldly belongings till it is liberated from this state by the offer of funeral cakes and libations of water. But this offer and libations must come from the hands of a son, son's son, son's son's son. If there is none of them, the spirit either goes to hell or becomes a ghost. Hence it is presumed that "there is no heavenly region for a sonless man and heaven awaits not one destitute of a son (vaisistha) Bhatnagar, 93.

54. Sant, Ram Dogra Code, 9.

55. Ganjoo, op.cit p.139.

56. Nazir, op. cit., p.351.

57. A barren lady was always subject to ridicule.

58. Biscoe, ***Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade***, p.105.

59. Moorcraft, William, ***Travels***, Part III, p.326. For further details see, Stein, A. Tr.Vol. 1. 123.

60. The tunic or the gown locally known as ***'Pheran'*** is said to be the contraction of Persian word ***'Pirahan'***. The long loose pheran with large and wider sleeves cover the whole body down to the ankles. Jehangir in his memoirs has not used the word ***'Pheran'*** but the details he has given about the kind of dress refer a dress like 'Pheran' victor Jacquemont names it as kurta. According to him it is a clock type wear very common among Kashmiris. See for reference ***various Trades in Kashmir***, Op.Cit. 1684. ***Victor Jacquemont letters***, p.237, Moorcraft, ***Travels***, part III pp.328-347. Dhar, S.N, ***"Folk Tales of Kashmir"***, p.6 Lawrence, Walter, Op.Cit. p.251.

61. M. Ashraf, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis. There are various theories given with regard to the origin of Pheran. But none disputes the assertion that it constitutes the national dress of Kashmiris. Wake field, ***The Happy Valley***, p.105. Biscoe , p.138.

62. It has been the subject of poetic fancy and in Kashmiri ***Wanvun*** Song, Kashmiris liking for Pheran has been repeatedly refereed to. this folk song was recited to me by Muneera' of Tchoh village of Pulwama district (unpublished)..

63. Moorcraft, ***"Travels"***, part III, p.378.

64. Lari Shah was presented by Farooq Ahmad of Bumai Village of Sopore. (unpublished)

65. Gwosh Lal Koul, ***"Kashmir through the Ages"***, p.249.

66(a). Torrens, H.D., op.cit, p.310.

66(b). Folk Song was revealed to me by one 'Rasul' of Nulai village, falling in Shupian Tehsil of Kashmir.

67. It has fallen in disuse now. For details see ***Son Adab***, cultural Academy *"Kasheer Number"*.

68. It was a woolen skull cap of crimson colour along with a red fillet on the forehead. The wider part of the cap was attached with a triangular piece of the winter stiff falling on the back and thereby concealing much of the hair. the ***Qasaba*** was generally made of Alvan cloth which was taken round in turns on ***'Takani'*** attached with innumerable safety pins. The long putch which falls down to the lower back is also attached with back portion of ***Qasaba*** with the help of the pins. ***Qasaba*** was of two types ***"Bon Qasaba"*** and ***Thond*** or ***Thod Qasaba.***

69. In place of ***Qasaba***, the head dress worn by Kashmiri Pandit women was known as taranga. It was just like ***Qasaba*** but with certain modification.

70. Since the ladies of upper strata of Kashmiri society maintained strict purdah, they are told by the women folk to shun pardah and take part in the Rov (festival) songs.

71. Vigne, "***Travels***, "Vol.II, p.140.

72. A type of cap quite distinct from ordinary ***Beli topi*** worn by village folk. Unlike the cap worn by villagers which was pointed at the top, this cap was spherical in shape. It looked more beautiful as it contained delicate golden embroidery work.

73. ***"Various Trades of Kashmir"***, Op.Cit. Add.1708, 1741 and 1742. See also ***Tales of Kashmir***, Dhar, S.N. p119.

74. In our creative literature also, we find references to ***Burqa.***

75. It was the unique way of maintaining the hair style adopted by Kashmiri women. See Vigne, G.T, Op.Cit., Vol.II, p.143. Also refer various ***"Trades in Kashmir"***, Op.Cit., 1617,1681,1692.

76. It is a famous verse of nineteenth century Kashmir romantic poet Rasul Mir.

76(b). Moorcraft, William, "***Travels***", Part III, p.328. For details see ***"Son Adab, Kashmir Number,*** Cultural Academy.

77. It was inferior to ***Pezar,*** it was generally worn by commoners -Refer ***"Son Adab, Kashmir Number"***, Cultural Academy.

78. It was a footwear used particularly during winter. It was made from dry paddy grass. Since it was less expensive and to avoid slip on frozen icy passages, villagers used it more commonly than the city people. But while coming to Srinagar it was removed even by the villagers at the entry point to Srinagar. There is a place in Nowgam area which is still known as *Pulhery stop*. During my survey I was told there that the villagers who were on their way to Srinagar city, would change their grass chapels (pulhory) here and that is why this particular spot is known as Pulhery stop. See also Lawrence, ***"Valley"***, Op.Cit., p.251.

79. It was slipper type wooden footwear. There were two types of ***"Khraves"***, ***'Khrav'*** and ***'Khravehor'***. It was used both by men and women. Also refer Dhar, S.N. "***Tales of Kashmir***"., p.85. ***Son Adab, Kashmir Number***, Cultural Academy. ***'Khravas'*** were generally prepared from the willow wood. Also See Moorcraft, William, "***Travels***, part III, p.328. ***"Various Trades in Kashmir***", Op.Cit., 1742.

80. This song was revealed to me by ***Mala ded*** of Bhagati Kanipora village of Chadora Tehsil also see Saqi, M.L. ***Luke Beth*** (Folk Songs) Vol.IV, p.196.

81. Sadhu, Pardesi, "***Keshir Luka Beth***" (Folk Songs) Vol.7, p.86.

82. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis entitled ***"Social Conditions in Kashmir"*** (1846-1947) by Parven Akhtar

83. It was popular forehead ornament worn by Kashmir married women. It was generally designed in the shape of almond. Saqi, M.L. Op.Cit., p.76. Also refer ***"History of Kashmir"***, P.N.K. Bamzai, p.343

84. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.38.

85. Poetic creation of a contemporary romantic poet.

86. See details in the thesis.

87. See details in the thesis at hand.

88. See detail in the thesis at hand.

89. This song was revealed to one me by an aged lady Fazy, of Chattabal Srinagar.

90. Saqi, ***"Folk Songs"***, (Kashmir) Vol.III. p.33.

91. Unpublished Songs, Collected from Nishat Brain.

92. It is a cradle song (manzeli beth) we find reference of ornaments in different cradle songs. This indicates that besides having the ornamental value, these might have been used as an object of attraction and pleasure for infant babies.

93. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.84.

94. **Ibid.,** p.41.

95. **Ibid.,** p.139.

96. Song was sung for me by ***Aisha*** of Natipora Srinagar. (unpublished).

97. G. T. Vigne, "***Travels***", Vol.II, p.144.

98. Saqi, Op.Cit., 23. V.III

99. Saqi, Op.Cit., Vol.III. p.200.

100. It was used to ward off the evil eye. Some times, if made of silver, it worked as an ornamental piece also. These ***tawizas*** were known by different names such as ***Hanji Taweeza, Rowani, Bowakwachi Cheli Taweza*** and ***Chakor Taweza.*** For details see Bhan, J.L and Rufai Riyaz- *Guide to the Exhibition of rare manuscripts.* 1987. *Gazetter of Kashmir and Ladakh*, p.472.

101. Nazir, ***"Keshir Depety"*** (Folk saying of Kashmir) p.168.

102. Gulshan Majeed, (ed) ***"Folklore studies"***, p.196.

103. The song was revealed to me by famous Kashmiri folk singer Gulam Muhammad Dar of Suthu Baghwanpora, Bar Bar Shah Srinagar (unpublished).

104. Cylinder type mud pot in which husked Shali was stored for daily use.

105. It was not moved frequently from one place to another. therefore a statue type person is often referred to as ***'lowapen'***.

106. Lawrence, ***Valley***, Op.Cit., p.249. Wake field, Vigne, G.T. "***Travels***", Vol.I, p.271 Hugal Baron, Charles Von, Op.Cit., p.159.

107. During my field work I collected this song from Padderpora Shopian. A lady whom I had a chance to see on the road leading to Kulgam revealed this song to me on my insist.

108. The period of extreme cold in the Valley starting from 21st of December and it lasts till March Ist. During this period snow gets frozen and the people remain almost indoors.

109. A trap door was usually there on the roof to ward off the snow in winter. Vigne, Op.Cit., Vol.I, p.270.

110. On the ground floor the sheep and cattle are penned, and some times the sheep are crowded into a wooden locker known as the ***dangij,*** where the children sit

in the winter and where the guest is made to sleep, for it is warmest place in the house. Lawrence, ***Valley***, Op.Cit., p.249.

111. This song was sung for me by a group of village girls at Sheikhapora, Pulwama during my field trip in 1997. (unpublished)

112. It constitutes a cheap furnishing floor item and is made of 'Petch', grassy product of lakes.

113. Shouq, ***Europeans on Kashmir***, (ed) pp.228-229.

114. Few structures even stood today but in a renovated form.

115. This is just like building the castles in the sand. The big palace type houses of Kashmiri elite always worked as tools of attraction. That is why, commoners express intense desire to enjoy the comforts of such decorated houses. The expressions refereed to above suggest the same feeling.

116. The delicate lattice work has been the unique feature of Kashmiri wooden architecture. Owing to its delicacy and grandeour, it has served as a source of poetic inspiration for many poets. For details See ***Koshur Encyclopedia,*** Cultural Academy. pp.163-170, Saqi, M.L. Op.Cit., 119.

117. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.64

118. **Ibid.,** p.75.

119. **Ibid.,** also see Biscoe, ***Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade***, p.110.

120. Kashmiri Wazwan is said to be the Mughal addition to Kashmiri dietary calendar. Kashmiri marriage is considered incomplete without the multiple varieties of wazwan. It is served in a sequential way. Four people belonging to same sex share one big rice plate known as ***Trami*** (big nickeled copper plate) See **"Kashmir Today"** ***"Wazwan".***

121. All these folk expressions show Kashmiris fondness for rice. See for details knowles "***A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings.*** Also see Nazir. ***"Keshery Depety"*** (Kashmiri Folk Sayings).

122. Robbert Thorp, ***"Kashmir Misgovernment"***, (Ed.) Fida Hussnain, pp.22-26.

123. **Ibid.,** For details see Bazaz, P.N . ***"Struggle for Freedom in Kashmiris",*** p.144.

124. Moorcraft, Op.Cit., p.350. It constituted the major dietary item of Kashmiri particularly during the times of natural calamities like floods and famine.

125. This song I gathered from a fisher women **"rehti"** from Hajin Sonawar, (unpublished).

126. Hugel, "***Travels***", Op.Cit., p.163.

127. Victor Jacquemont, Op.Cit., p.76.

128. It is a distinctive style of sharing the ***wazwan***. Four persons of same sex sit around the copper plate to share the sumptuous wazwan.

129. It is one of the famous forms of Kashmiri folk theatre. For details see M. S. Bhagat, ***"Folk Theatre of Kashmir"*** (Koshur Luka theatre). Kashmiri Department, Kashmir University.

130. M.L. Saqi, Vol.III, p.87.

131. Kashmiris have developed a unique mechanism of conserving vegetables for winter use. At the outset of the autumn season, when different vegetables are available in abundance at cheaper rates they dry up these vegetables in an open sunlight. The dried vegetables are then consumed during the chilly winter days.

132. Not only green and fresh vegetables are dried for winter use but different varieties of fish are also dried to use them in the winter. One type of such dried fish is known as **"Howagard".**

133. It is another category of dried fish.

134. Lotus roots (nadru) is a pet dish of Kashmiri people. It is mostly available during winter months.

135. In order to add flavour to the winter dishes, people used to make the cakes of red chilly. Some spices and oil is added to the red chilies and is pounced with ginger in the kanz (mortar) then the mashed chilly is dried up in a circular shape. During winter days, women in order to add to the flavour of the dishes use this **vari.**

136. I have failed to find this folk expression in any of the folk saying collections but the same was told to me by one Syed Asgar Hussain of Hassanabad Rainawari.

137. People here in Kashmir generally take fish from September to April. Taking fish in the summer months would usually cause intestinal disorders. Hence people avoid taking fish in summer months.

138. Harisa is said to have been introduced here in Kashmir from Iran. It is a delicious winter dish and is being prepared by skilled person known a

"herssegery"? It is also used as a gift item to please higher ups friends and relatives. Sensitive relations exchange herisa on some auspicious occasions during winter.

139. It was also a special dietary item which was cooked all through the night and it was prepared occasionally and was distributed among the friends and the neighbours and relatives.

140. These are all preparations and are used as the community meals in the hour of natural disaster to invoke the aid of the exalted souls for mitigating the distress.

141. This song was sung by the children to ridicule those who refused to contribute for community meals.

142. This is a children's song who sing it in admiration of those who would contribute generously for community meals.

143. A dish prepared out of half grinded corn, boiled in winter. It served as a substitute for rice during the scarcity period caused either by famine or floods.

144. It is a rough and rustic kind of bread, which is very hard to chew. It is very oldest form of food item. There is a reference in Sheikh Nur-ud-dins poetry regarding this kind of bread and in a state of abject poverty people resorted to take this kind of rough bread.

145. Instead of break fast, Kashmiris are in the habit of taking salt tea with the wheat or maize flour bread. Kashmiris fondness for salt tea is unmatching. It was imported during our period of study from Sinkiang, china and other parts.

146. Kashmir had very close and rich trade links with different countries of the Central Asian region. It served as a halting spot for trading caravans coming from Central Asia to the South of India. See for details ***Central Asia and Kashmir*** Bamzai.

147. It is said to be a replica of Russian tea pot : **"Samavar".** It is made of a copper with a white nickel coat. Salt tea is prepared in a big samavar and the sweet tea kehwa is prepared in a small smavar. For details see ***"Kashmir media"*** Merc-Kashmir University.

148. It is believed by the folk that few cups of salty tea reduces the fatigue and people enjoy this kind of tea particularly after hard labour. For details see Shah Abadi's ***"Chainama".*** Research library University of Kashmir.

149. This type of sweet tea known as **kehwa** is generally taken on festive days or other delightful occasions. People with rich taste add also Saffron to kehwa to make it more tasty and colourful.

150. Introduction, ***"Folk Tales"***, Vol.7 M.Y. Teng. For detail see ***"Hamara Adab"*** Folklore Number Kashmiri Department, Kashmiri University.

151. Introduction to ***"Hatims Tales"*** (Kash). M.Y. Teng.

152. During period under review, many Persian Epics and romantic tales were either translated or adopted into Kashmiri by eminent Kashmiri poets like, Mehmood Gami, Wali-ullah Mattoo, Maqbool Kralwari Wahab Parray Hajini and others. The entire period in the history of Kashmiri literature History is termed as the period of Mathnavis (see for details. Shouq, Shafi, ***"History of Kashmiri Literature"*** (Kash).

153. He was a professional story teller who revealed Aurel Stein couple of Kashmiri folk tales. Stein collections of Kashmiri folk tales is named after him.

154. An oldest extant Kashmiri folk tale. It has also been penned down by few Kashmiri poets during the period of our study.

155. It is one of the earliest oral piece of histro-fictional literature. It brings into focus rivalry between the Nagas and the Pischasas, the two oldest Tribes, who inhabited in the Valley after the desiccation of water.

156. Bhands Folk Minstrels who amused people by their folk performances. See Lawrence, Gazeteer of Kashmir, *Valley*, and Bhagat, M.S. ***"Bhande jishan"*** and ***"Luke theatre"***.

157. See my paper published in ***"Anhar"*** "social protest as depicted in *"Kashmiri Folk theatre"*. Kashmiri Department, Kashmir University.

158. **Dambali** is one of the folk forms of Kashmiri dance. During the period of our study, it was a common agency of community recreation. The dambaliys of Khandru, Anantnag are famous for their skill, wit and proficiency. The dambali faqirs as they are known perform their art and skill on the urs days of different Sufi and Rishi saints particularly at the shrine of Baba Lal din at Zakura and Baba Nasib at Bijbihara.

159. Lawrence, Op.Cit. p.257.

160. Lari Shah has already been discussed and these are some major topics about whom we find references in our ***"Lari Shah"***. These poems give us vivid

picture of the peoples sufferings amid natural calamities that Shocked people and the land repeatedly during the period under reference.

161. There are mainly two types of saints foreign and local. The local saints with distinct characteristics are known as ***Rishis.*** They have utter disregard for worldly pleasures and prefer solitude to society. See for detail Ishaq Khan's ***Kashmir's Transition to Islam - the Role of Rishes.***

162(a) ***Becha nagma*** is said to have gained momentum during the Afghan Rule in Kashmir. It was a popular recreational, means for commoners and the people interested in Sufi exercises. During the period under reference and most particularly during the lost phase of Dogra rule, these ***becha nagmas*** often resulted in group clashes. The detail was revealed to me by Sonnah-ullah Dar of Bagwanpora Sathu who had himself participated in such exercises.

162(b) It is a popular folk music form of Kashmir. For further details see Aima, M.L ***"Folk Music of Kashmir"*** Qaiser Kaslanders ***"Kashmiri Music".*** Some folk instruments used in chakri include, ***Tombak nari, Notu, Sarang, Sazi Kashmiri*** and few other folk apparatus. People amused themselves for nights together in the company of Chakri singers.

163. Hafiza denoted a charming woman who could remember songs ranging from hafiz of Sheeraz to Rasul Mir of Shahabad by heart. Although the quarters of Hafiza were the abode of dance and song, she basically symbolised good manner and aristocratic etiquette. The institution seems to have reached to its zenith during Mughal times. It was one of the most important source of recreation for landed elite and other categories of aristocracy. ***Sheeraz*** (English) pp.98-100. M.Y. Teng, See also Fida Hussanain, ***Encyclopedia of Kashmir.***

164. Quoted by Shouq in ***"European on Kashmir".***

165. Tashvan and Misuma are two localities in Srinagar city where Hafiza pavilions were situated, but during Dogras the Institution degenerated and turned into brothel. In the light of fierce campaign launched by Subhan Naid of Misuma against the brothels Maharaja banned it in 1934. For details see, Khan, Ishaq. ***History of Srinagar***, and ***"Sheeraza"*** Shaksiyat Number.

166. Nazir, G.N. Op.Cit., p.98.

167. It was one of the folk recreational item, it has fallen in disuse now.

168. Though the song does not beer the name of its poet and was revealed to me by a lady ***"Khezer"*** of Sopore as a folk song. But its poetic treatment does not

suggest it to be a piece of folk poetry. However, the song refers to an important recreational item, popular among children until, very recently.

169. These are all folk games. We don't find any reference of these games in historical narrative. The truth stands that these constituted an integral part of the Kashmiris folk sports Calendar. Refer ***"Son Adab"*** Kasheer Number, Cultural Academy. Also see ***"Keshiri Nasruk Tawarkh,"*** Khyal and Rehbar. An article written by late Dina Nath Nadim entitled Kashmiri Folk games has been reproduced in the anthology of Kashmiri prose.

170. Saqi, M.L. Op.Cit., p.13 (children's song)

171. Lawrence, ***"Valley of Kashmir",*** p.266

172. It was a major recreational exercise for Sikh aristocracy. Generally these dancing girls would come from Wattal communities. According to Hugel these nautch girls were maintained at the state expenses and the Sikh governors were enslaved by these dancing girls. Maharaja Gulab Singh and Maharaja Ranbir Singh also maintained the nautch girls for themselves and for the European guests. Commenting on the sad plight of the ntuch girls, Hugel further states a under.
"These poor creatures are doomed to a hard fate, they are not allowed either to sing or dance without permission, and if they get this, an officer of the government always accompanies them, who grasps, whatever they received. Hugel, ***Travels in Kashmir and Punjab,*** p.146. See also Hassan, ***Terik***h, vol,II. p.673. Foster, op.cit, Vol. II, pp.24-25. Honigberger, ***Thirty Five Years in the East*** p.183 Wake field -***Kashmir and Kashmiris,*** p.170. Fedrick Drew. ***Jammu and Kashmir territories,*** p.182

173. Detailed as above.

174. Divan Kripa Ram was a Sikh Governor in Kashmir. He had an abundant taste for music and dance. He always managed to sit in the Shikara in the company of Kashmiri dancing girls wearing jingling feet ornaments. It was for his sensual attraction towards 'Saaz and Awaz' that he was nicknamed as ***'Kripa Shroney".***

175. These games were particularly popular among children especially in small girls.

176. Forester George, Op.Cit., ii, p.26.

177. A temple dedicated to local dietary Ragniya Great jubilation is seen there at the time of annual fair. Kashmir Pandits do not take meat during the festive days. It is situated at Tulmul Ganderbal some twenty kelometres away from Srinagar.

178. J. S. Dev. ***"Natural Calamities of Jammu and Kashmir***, pp 5o-55.

179. Lawrence, Op.Cit., p.318.

180. I collected this ***Rov*** song from archives library Radio Kashmir Srinagar. this song is a part of the programme known as *'Nagma Wuzan Neeryn Te Nayan'*.

181. This ***'Rov'*** song was generally sung during the month of Ramzan.

182. M. L. Saqi, ***Kashmiri Folk Songs*** (Kash) Vol.3 p.180.

183. **Ibid.**

184. **Ibid.**

185. It is one of the celebrated sights in Srinagar. the Shrine houses the sacred relic of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H).
For details see G. R. Bhat, ***MOI-MUQADAS- Tarikh Ke Aine Mein*** (Urdu).

186. This song is often sung by young girls on the eve of Meraj-ul-Alam or Prophet Muhammads (P.B.U.H) birth anniversary.

187. This is a poem of elegiac nature and metre. The authorship is unknown. Hence I put it in the column of folk Maarsiya. I heard it from Mohammad Jawad of Bhagwan pora Lal Bazar few Years ago.

188. Sung by Nirmala Raina, Kashmiri Pandit lady married at Jammu Premnagar New plots.

189. Robert Thorp, ***"Kashmir Misgovernment"***, p.52. P. N. Bazaz, ***Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*** , p.

190. This song I collected from a shawl weaver Qadir Joo of Malarata Srinagar (unpublished).

191. Hindus hold vitasta as sacred river. The water of vitasta was used by Kashmiri Pandits for conducting various ceremonial exercises.

192. Ginsberg, "***Sociology***", p.153.

193. Bogardus, E.S "***Sociology***", p.475.

194. Anderson and Parker, ***"Society"***, p.34.

195. M. L. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.44.

196. It is not published in any folk song collection.

197. Shad, ***"Anthology of Folk songs"*** (Wanvun portion)

198. It is a kind of folk song related to the ceremony of death among Kashmiri Pandits. It is recited in a peculiar tune by a lady well versed in the technique. The category of folk songs has fallen in disuse. For details see Saqi- ***Burze Metchi Hendy Beth.***

199. Saqi, Published in cradle songs of Folk Song Collection Cultural Academy.

200. See for details ***"Customs and Rituals of Kashmiri Pandits",*** S.N. Bhat, Kashmiri Department Publication. Also see Biscoe- ***"Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade"***, Hindu Customs, pp.161-165.

201. Collected by M.L Saqi.

202. **Ibid.**

203. Revealed to me by Satyabhama, Lecturer linguistics, University of Kashmir.

204. After offering the Friday Prayers, special congregation was held at the grave yard, where under the leadership of Local Imam a collective Fateh was conducted. After completing the Fateh, people gathered, were generally served with a cup of salt tea at the house of the bereaved. The Friday occasion was perhaps initiated to provide an opportunity to the greater number of people to participate in the occasion. Because Friday was generally a off day for the skilled and the artisan class in urban Srinagar. In rural Kashmir, the ceremony was generally held on the 4th day of the deceased person.

205. ***Kuliyati*** Maqbool Shah Kralwari verses quoted from famous poem *"Grees Nama".*

206. This Song was collected from an aged Kashmiri Pandit lady Shubavati of Sathu Bar Bar Sheh, who is presently living at Talab Tiloo, Jammu.

CHAPTER Sixth

Reflection of Kashmiri Woman in Folk Verse

UNIVERSAL COMPUTERS

No study of a society is considered complete without a reference to the position of a women in it. The position of a woman in a society reflects the cultural level, mental refinement and the standard of its civilization[1]. The ancient historical literature bear evidence to the fact that women in Kashmir enjoyed the maximum degree of freedom and liberty[2]. No socio religious pursuit or exercise was deemed complete without the active participation of the women[3]. With the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate in the fourteenth century, women in Kashmir, received new incentives to continue their literary pursuits.[4] This is evidenced by a galaxy of celebrated ladies Kashmir produced during the period. But the dawn of Afghan rule in Kashmir signaled an unending period of gloom, aversion and degeneration[5]. In the wake of Afghan rule, not only the political fortunes of the state underwent a drastic change but the social institutions as well, did not remain unaffected. Kashmiri women, who once occupied a prominent position in the social milieu of Kashmir went into the deep oblivion of obscurity, ignorance, illiteracy, disease and dependence[6]. Her responses, reaction and the protests against the system to which she was subject to, found expression in no other form as in the folk songs of *"Rov and wanvun"*.[7] Unlike historical literature, we do not find a stereotype picture of Kashmiri women in these rich folk melodies but we come across a Kashmiri women who is

full of virtues and vices and with all beauty and ugliness. We find her in the form of a sincere wife, helping her husband by discharging multiple of domestic and commercial duties; and at the same time we find in her the feminine frailty which prompts her to satisfy the sensual lust of her paramour. In the same contrasting portrayal, we see her as a compassionate daughter, providing every sort of relief and consolation to her parents and at the same time, we find her engaged into number of anti familial exercises as a daughter-in-law in her husbands house, causing rupture and disturbance in the other wise peaceful and cordial atmosphere[8]. With all these contrasting colours, we find a true picture of Kashmiri women in different genres of Kashmiri folk literature and most particularly in *"Wanvun"* and *Rov* songs. These songs are said to be the running commentary of the sad plight of Kashmiri women, who in a particular period of our history were denied access even to the slightest degree of dignity and honour.

Birth of a son was regarded fortunate

There is an ample evidence available in the folk literature which show that the birth of a son was regarded more fortunate than that of a daughter[9]. A quite good number of *'Rov'* and Manzly Bēth (cradle songs) refer directly or indirectly to the disappointment of a women who had given birth to a female child. Take for example this cradle song.

Deke prezlium nikeney zenai,
Vowani kenh nai gam mēy chum.
Hash Miani khowash Cham Tanai;
Vowany Kenh nai gam mey Chum.[10]

(My fortune Changed with the delivery of a male issue,
I am relieved of agony and pain.
My mother-in-law looks pleased with me now,

I am relived of agony and pain).

OR

In the following verse of a wanvun (marriage song) parents recall the painful moment when a daughter was born to them. See for example

zene chani dowakh tchayi wanchanyarien,
Dariyen peth chī hore wanvūn.[11]

(your birth caused bend to the towering trees of the jungle ,
now on your wedding , fairies are singing melodies to depart you).

However, in absence of any female child in the family, parents and elders in the family usually expressed pleasure and delight on the birth of a daughter. This is depicted in this cradle song,

Bakhte bed kūr seny,
Dūr deny dūre deny.
Hēri tāpe rūde shreny,
Dure deny dura deny[12].

(Our daughter has come with a good luck for the family,
She is the priceless diamond; she is the priceless diamond.
She is just like a fountain shower,
Amid scorching summer heat).

The enthusiasm created by the birth of a male child was equally contrasted by the down mood of the family members especially woman folk at the birth of the female child. But with the passage of time, it has been observed, that the daughter would receive extra love and care from the parents and family elders and there are innumerable child songs (shury Beth) which deal with the extra parental devotion towards their daughter. this is also substantiated by the prevalence of an institution of *"Dowakhtari-khana-Nashin"* during the period under reference. According to this scheme, the husband of the daughter is made to stay in wife's house, instead of taking wife to his home.

A portion of a marriage song concerning the delight of a father expressed on the occasion of bringing the husband of her daughter at his home is given as under.

Bebe seng kurī khānai mojē
Chōn deka lōn hai garai Āv,
Maji ros kurī khanai mōjī -
Chōn deka lōn hai garai Āv[13]

(O my sole daughter 'stop shedding tears, you will not have to part with me! Your husband will settle with us permanently in your parental home.
O, motherless daughter- don't sob and sigh-your husband will stay with us permanently in your parental home.
we have a very good number of folk expressions in the form of proverbs , riddles and sayings which furnish suitable information on the subject under discussion.

Early Marriage

Though the popular literature does not provide us any definite clue which may help us to ascertain the actual marriageable age of Kashmiri girl, but we can infer from innumerable folk expressions that girl were married at the very early age during the period under review[14]. As already stated in the foregoing pages that the first phase of the period under review (1819-1846) witnessed appalling heights of immoral activities; the parents thus were found always disturbed to get their daughters married as early as possible[15]. In addition to this the poverty factor could not also be altogether ignored which might have prompted the parents to get their daughters married at the early age. Our folk literature abounds in references which suggest that girls were married at the early age. In the following 'Rov' song the pain experienced by such girls is expressed in a heart piercing tune. See for example:

Sane chum gomut vele vesy bavei,
Havei chowakh tai jigreky dāg.
Tele tche pheri yeli bo ravei,
Havei chowakh tai jigreky dāg.

Mēly maji tchōrum azlei lonei,
Bali hai osum vuni lowakchar.
Mūr bo zejnes tez tule narei,
Havei chowakh tai jigreky dag.[16]

(O, my friend would you like to share my woes?
I am plunged into grief and gloom!
You will definitely have a remorse!
But, when I will depart the world around!
My father managed my marriage, without taking me into confidence,
I am reduced to ashes inwardly, who is there to listen me?
Would you spare some time to share my agony and pain?)

In yet another verse, we find the same protestive tune of a Kashmiri girl, who had been given in marriage without being asked for and how she spends her days in an environ of mistrust and suspicion, is depicted in this 'Rov' song.

Shine mani hendy pēthy endrī gejsei,
Bali hai Rovum tāza lowakachār.
Wāvas athi soze tethis gravei,
Havei chowakh tei gigrety dāg.[17]

(I have been allowed to melt like a frozen ice in a mid sun shine,
Alas! I have been robbed of my beauty and youth!
I will convey my sad impressions through a crow to my father,
Shall it listen the song of my sick soul)!

In addition to this, there are good number of folk expressions such as *'Bala Pan, 'Shury Pan' 'Lev mur', 'Poshi ther,*[18] etc. etc. Which stand as an evidence to the fact that girls in Kashmir were married at the very early stage of their life.

In one of the Kashmiri proverbs girl has been dubbed as the "pot of the fire in flames over the head of the father. If any leniency was displayed on the part of the father in discharging the marriage of his daughter, parents were made subject to severe criticism and ridicule[19]. But at the root of the seemingly social transaction, the

youth, beauty and the blooming dreams of the delicate bride were left to destroy unsung and unheard.

As for the marriage negotiation, we can infer from popular literature that the bride and the bridegroom in a Kashmiri social life, during the period under survey had no voice in the selection of a match[20]. The opinion of the girl or the boy relating to their marriage negotiation was regarded nothing less than indecency and opprobrious. No doubt, in Muslim families, the consent of the boy and girl was sought before penning down the marriage agreement *(Nikah)* but it was done more as an act of formality rather than enacting the conviction. The silence of a Muslim girl was generally taken for her approval to the marriage alliance. The Kashmiri proverb in circulation is an indicative to this set of situation. The proverb is as under:

"Sherīf kori heng tchopei gō ankār."

(The very silence of a girl symbolises her decent character and gentleness and her approval for marriage contract)

Ignoring all together the opinion of a girl or boy, before being tied into the wedlock, often resulted into the post marriage conflicts, psychological tensions and the domestic feuds. There are number of Kashmiri folk songs which contain ample information regarding the disastrous effects of the inconvenient and uncongenial marriages. Some times parents did not hesitate to marry their young daughters to the aged and ailing persons in exchange of petty benefits. See how an aged and handicapped bridegroom married to young and beautiful bride is made subject to abuse and ridicule in this Kashmiri satirical folk song.

Ade khor ade lyok gomut chotye,
Ami khote oswe motye jān.

Hendis tei Hunis hankal kertav
Goadeni sery tav khulhas vath.
Mehreny dedyye nabas kun vechtei
Babas khowate bod meharaze hei ai.[21]

(How better it would have been to receive an insane as a bridegroom!? See how ugly, handicapped and aged he is!?
It is just like tying together sheep and dog,
Poor alliance is destined to break immediately !
Keep the option for divorce open.
O, bride have a look at the distant sky,
Your bridegroom looks more aged and elderly than your grand father.)

Not only among Kashmiri Muslims was the child marriage in vogue, but the practice was in operation among the Kashmiri Pandits too[22]. Literary evidences suggest that many Hindu girls would become widow even at a very tender age and spent the entire life in seclusion and servitude[23]. The grim picture of the enforced widowhood among the Kashmiri Pandits is stated by P.N. Bazaz in these words:

"The savage practice of burning widows had been abolished but the custom of enforced widow hood still persisted among the Pandits. Its evil effects were worsened by the bad custom of early marriage. The status of a family was measured by age of a girl at the time of nuptials; the younger the girl the more respectable the family. Many of the girls lost their husbands in childhood. There were cases when girls of tender age, mere tiny toddlers, became widows. What mental agony and physical privations a maiden endured when, on reaching the age of puberty, she learned that she was married long ago and her husband was already dead!. And the wretched widow could claim no friends to champion her cause".[24]

As revealed from Hindu folk religious song, Kashmiri Pandits considered it irreligious to marry their daughters even at the very tender age of eight. It was believed equal to sin,[25] if a Hindu parent showed a slightest delay in getting their daughter married. This is evidenced from this "mekhi vatchin".

Telik bata kya darmi esi
Sata verish karan esy keniydān.

Timnei sowargeky bār vethy esi
Ram Lakhman vane vesij gov.
OR
Azik bata kya pepi esi
Sata veryshan koriyen athadaran
Timnei nargeky bar vethy ēsī
Ram Lakhman Vanvesy gei.[26]

(Pandits in the past were highly religious minded,
They married their daughters before they reached seven years age.
We presume a corner reserved for them in the heaven,
Abiding the dictation of Father, Ram and Lakhman decided to leave for the jungle.)

OR

(Pandits of today are sinners;
By allowing their daughters to stay at their fathers house at the age of seven.
Hell! awaits them!
Ram and Lakhman proceeded towards jungles)

But the trend underwent an abrupt change at the close of the period under review. This was largely because of the modern education, initiated by European missionaries, that a roll of young Kashmiri Pandits began to crusade against the age old practice of early marriage, child widowhood and sati.

But so far Kashmiri Muslims were concerned, the trend continued even after close of the period under survey. No attempt was made even by the religious elite among the Muslims like *Mulhas* and *Pirzadas* to liberate the Muslim community from the clutches of age old traditions and practices.[27]

The unmatching conjugal relations sometimes led girls to resort to immoral exercises, which not only brought shame to the parents but all the relations had to

cut a sorry figure[28]. How this ugliest reality of our social life has been metaphorically depicted in this folk verse.

Subheki vāvo bar me eleravō,
Nikum Mōl rat gare tchir hō āv.[29]

(O, cool morning breeze, don't cause the door of my house open,
Father of my baby (husband) had reported back abruptly to his home.)

An address to the morning breeze was practically a hint to the paramour not to venture into her lovers house in presence of her husband. The above cited verse suggests that loyalty and trust was not the virtue that could always be attributed to Kashmiri women. Incidental exposure of such immoral exercise would often lead to divorces among Kashmiri Muslims. Even at times, it so happened that due to familial animosity, the conjugal partners were forced by their parents to break the emotional relations. Under such circumstances, the parted couple would never forget the delightful memories connected with their sweet conjugal life. The magnitude of the emotional crises caused by such forceful separation is portrayed in this Kashmiri proverb.

"Khetli ditchayokh kath
Temy dop myanian chi bhar vethy"

(A divorcee though she is!
But she still feels emotionally concerned
with her ex-husbands house).

Knowing that she had been divorced long back; and had ceased to be the member of that family, she still feels worried to see her ex-husband's family members in trouble. The contrasting shades of Kashmiri women depicted in our folk literature is difficult to find in other literary sources.

Marriage of a boy and girl was almost settled in the family of like socio-economic level.[30] An indication to this social dimension can be discerned from below proverbs.

Zechi zet te pechi pat
OR
Hivis hue go nabad tchioh.

The only qualification which was put to strict examination was to see whether a boy was in possession of a strong muscular strength or not. Any boy lacking such a basic qualification was generally dropped out. Folk sayings like *orzu te dor kot, hak bata khenewol* and *Hivis huo*[31] refer to some of the fundamental qualifications, generally attached with the institution of marriage in Kashmir. Any compromise even of a slightest nature on above cited conditions and qualification was bound to lead towards negative results in the Muslim family life in Kashmir.

Polygamy

As regards polygamy, we find uncountable reference in the folk literature, but the content and the treatment of various Kashmiri folk tales lead us to suggest that Hindus as well as Muslims opted for second marriage only after the death of their previous wives.[32] No doubt, the institution might have been in operation in the families of the upper strata of Kashmiri society; but its presence among the commoners particularly during the period of utter economic crises could hardly be attested by qualification and merit. However, the frequent use of folk expression like "Sowan"[33] in the vernacular, which stands for evil machinations of the co-wife could not be also ignored altogether. It symbolised a constant terror in the other wise calm and cordial family life of Kashmir. Judging against this back ground, the presence of

the institution like polygamy could not be disputed altogether. In context of Kashmir society during the period under review, there could have been little for commoners to follow the feudal or elite tastes except during the periods of unavoidable urgency and need.

Purdah

Inspite of being in majority, only the women of few privileged and orthodox Muslim families observed Purdah in the strict sense of the term[34]. Not to talk in public, even within the four walls of their houses, these families, maintained separate chambers for their lady folk. In tune with the aristocratic and feudal temperament, women of the privileged Kashmiri Pandit families also adhered to a kind of veil which marked their special status and position[35]. Barring these privileged and the Muslim religious families, there was no strict purdah system in operation in Kashmir during the period under survey[36]. No doubt, Muslim women in Srinagar city belonging to the artisan families were in the habit of using a kind of Purdah known as Burqa when they usually came out of their dwellings for discharging any social assignment. As per the literary evidences, Kashmiri Pandit women belonging to common Hindu families did not use any kind of veil to conceal their charms[37]. To quote G.T. Vigne", There is no purdah or concealment of the features of women excepting among the higher classes". The habit of maintaining privacy and confinement by the privileged Kashmiri Pandit families seems to be guided more by aristocratic fashion than any religious dictation. A careful study of Kashmiri *'Rov'* songs reveal that it had always been the ardent desire of women belonging to common folk to have a glimpse of the ladies of the privileged and the economically

well off families. With all probability, it might have been thought indecent and undignified by the upper class families of Kashmiri society to allow their lady folk to mix with the ladies of the common origin.

The inborn tendency of a fair sex to share every recreational occasion collectively of course, prompted the women of unprivileged classes to invite the ladies of the privileged one to take part in the group recreational exercises like 'Rov' especially on festive days of Idd and other occasions. The intense desire of women of common origin to enjoy the idd jubilation together with the ladies of privileged classes is expressed in a very touching style in this Kashmir *'Rov'* song.

Pīr kōren quowarāba neryn-kati neran nebar lō!
Sheikh kōren quowrāba neryn-kati neran mebar lō!
Idd ayem rov hei karv dery gando vesev lō,
Mire koren qowarēba neryn,-kati neran nebar lō!
Awai Ramzan Quran Parv,-vele sarv jenat lō[38]
Mirza koren quawaraba neryn,- kati neran nerbr lō!

(Girls of Muslim Pir families cant move out of their dwellings-They maintain strict veil,
Idd has come, let us sing idd choruses-It is futile to call the girls of 'Mir' family to share 'Rov' songs with us.
Ramzan has come-let us recite Quran in melodious tune Girls of Mirza family wore pherans with qowaraba' type sleeves- How is it possible for them to come out and take part in the 'rov' songs).

Even for common Hindu women, it was a dream desire to share any occasion of jubilation with the ladies of the aristocratic-Dhar family of Kashmiri Pandits see how this intense desire is expressed in this festive song of Kashmiri language-

Dhare bhayi vese cham mandāchan ches tai
Vesi hund getche hā manze cham dowes tai[39]

(I crave to have a company of the daughters of Dhar family, inspite of my strong urge, I could not see them why?- there is big high wall separating the two)

In Srinagar as well as in rural areas, the majority of the Muslim women had to work side by side with men either in the Karkhana or in the field. In these circumstances purdah was an object, which was hardly taken care of. Women folk in villages moved freely without any purdah and in urban areas too the women belonging to Hanjis (boatmen) Kander (bakers) dandar (vegetable growers) moved and exhibited their charms publicly. For this public orientation and the sense of superiority rooted in the perception of rich pedigree, Muslim religious families often treated these Muslim sections with disdain and contempt.

Working women

An attentive study of Kashmiri folktales lend us to hold that common folk believed less in gender discrimination particularly in context of work culture. We find abundance of information regarding Kashmiri women working side by side with their male partners in different disciplines of life[40]. This is also substantiated by the information contained in the literary texts of the period. The folk poems like *'Kral Koer', 'Pehli Koer''Dhobi Bhayi', 'Kander Koer'* and *'Grees Korey'* bear ample evidence to the fact that Kashmiri woman discharged its professional talent very skillfully and thereby she would contribute in the over all welfare and the happiness of the family life. Not to talk of discharging domestic assignment or field works, Kashmiri women discharged the function of a shepherd lending sheep and cattle both in the plains and on the mountain summits of the beautiful valley. In the *'Pehly Koer'* (shepherd girl) folk balled, Kashmiri girl has been shown in full possession of

professional wit and wisdom which she discharges while regulating the large flock of sheep. In *'Kral Koer'*[41] (potter woman) folk balled also, she is appreciated for her unmatching patience and person qualities. The folk poem *"Grees Koer"* not only unveils the beauty gifts of her bewitching youth but it also uncovers her resourcefulness to enact any kind of work assigned to her by her family members. From the content of above referred to poems, we can hold with less doubt that except the women of privileged classes, the ladies of common nature helped their families in multiple of ways and thus it carries enough to erode the myth that Kashmiri women were devoid of physical charms and professional gift.

The Widow

Reflections regarding widow in Kashmiri folk tales and proverbs draw us to believe that widowhood especially at a young age was considered to be the worst possible misfortune[42]. Although, Islam does not put any restriction on the widow remarriage, but still the death of a husband would divorce a Muslim women from all the worldly gifts. She was looked down upon and on times was badly treated by her family members[43]. The different folk expressions prevalent even today in Kashmiri language guide us to great extent in understanding the collective attitude and behaviour of the individuals towards the widows in the society. See the following folk sayings:

"Mowand kiya diyi mowandi pam"
"Mowandi Nei qesmet asiha bad runei kyaze merihas".
"Mowandi nish cha reny mangeyi gatchen"
"Moond kya di kowali bund"[44]

"It does not behave proper for a widow to pass bad remarks against another widow"
"Had widow not been herself unfortunate, her husband would not have died so untimely"

"You can not place a petition for husband before the widow"
"How widow could be expected to repair the cracks in a flooded river bank"?

In sharp contrast to the description of a widow in the proverbs, we find revealing details about widow in number of Kashmiri folk tales. In folk tales a widow is often dubbed as the embodiment of human virtues like patience, tolerance, sacrifice and her commitment to the deceased husband is appreciated when she is being projected as taking every care to look after the relics of her dead husband[45]. There are quite a good number of references in our folk tales wherein a Muslim widow is shown to as taking a job of maidservant in the rich Kashmiri Pandit family to earn the livelihood for herself and for her children[46]. She also acted as a go between (manzimyor) arranging the marriage for Muslim couples.

But the most reliable companion, Kashmiri widow generally found in her isolation was the "Yender" ,[47] the spinning wheel. We have a good number of wheel songs (Yendre beth) which contain pathetic account of painful life of a Kashmiri widow. An attentive examination of these wheel songs unlock the deep pain and the pangs of Kashmiri widow, caused by her family members in permanent absence of his life partner. See how human pain is depicted with poetic touch.

From the above account, it looks less imaginary to hold that "Yender" (wheel) was not only a major source of widows sustenance but it was a friend is solitude, a solace amid exhaustion and a hope in misery.

Barrenness-woman's greatest misfortune

Along with widowhood, barrenness[48] was also recognised as the gravest flaw of a woman. A barren woman was often compared to an eagle. She was given no respect and her voice in the household carried little weight and value. This is understandable, as motherhood is regarded to be the supreme function of women. Here are few folk sayings which may help us in understanding the general mood of the society regarding the barrenness of a women.

"Vēntis hei keryze
Te hēntis kya karakh"
:"Hānt kya zani shury sund dōd
Gānth kya zani pūty sund dōd"
"Powatre bowachi hūn koawachi"

(Hard nut is fruitful enough than a barren lady)
It is impossible for a barren lady to have a slightest idea of labour pain)
A widow resembles with an eagle which is devoid of any love to chick.
(A barren lady likes to have a puppy in her lap than to remain childless).

In a joint family structure which was prevalent in Kashmiri during the period under reference, a barren lady was often made subject to taunts and teases especially from her mother-in-law and sister-in-law (Hash te zam)[49]. She was put to live under constant psychological strain and if she failed to ward off barrenness, she was forced to leave the house under the dictations of *'Hash'* and *'zam'*. Sometimes she was not even divorced for years together and was left unattended in her parental house. The sad plight of such ladies is depicted in this folk saying.

"Setet verish beni che ametch sethe vehris bhēyis vapas"

("A seventy year old divorced sister had come back
to her seven year old brother).

Under such strained situation, the only spot of solace for maltreated ladies seemed to be the shrine of any saintly soul. We have plenty of references available in

different genres of Kashmiri folk literature which may be advanced to attest our argument. Here we quote a verse of a folk song in which a barren lady is advised by her friends to visit the shrine of Sheikh Noor-ud-din to ward off her barrenness.

Alamdar sund patchi sān khasevei
tali nērān khāban tar
Sath chem mei tati kowatch bervey
tati neran khaban tar

(O, lonesome and broken! You rush to the shrine of
Sheikh Nur-ud-din at tchvar,[50]
Your dream and yearning will bear the fruit there!
You reveal all your deepest pangs there,
I am sure you will be blessed their with a similing hope)!

The same kind of feeling is depicted in this Kashmiri proverbs also.

"Demby dadi chi larun pewān astanan"
(Barrenness prompts a lady to rush madly
towards the tombs of the saints).

Though there was no restriction on the widow remarriage among the Muslims, it was found that the ladies whose husbands died even during their youth preferred to live lonely for their children than to go for second marriage[51]. In case of Kashmiri Pandit family, widow remarriage was discouraged more by Brahminical conservatism rather than the personal wish or intention of the widow. To quote Bazaz:

"Divorce and remarriage of widows were detested by selfish Hindus who attached moral and religious stigma to these essential liberties and thus the unfortunate women remained subservient to the male authority for the whole of their lives. The magnitude of cruelty in enforced widowhood can be estimated by the fact that, in 1920 A.D, during Pratab Singhs days, there were thirteen percent of Hindu girls who had lost husbands in early childhood when they were totally ignorant of the significance of the marriage ceremony, or consequences of widowhood. Equally distressing was the case of hundreds of deserted young Hindu wives whom society refused the elementary human rights of divorce and remarriage despite the fact that they were known to be innocent and had been caste aside by the caprice of heartless husbands"[52].

The estimation of A.L. Altekar regarding the position of widow in a Hindu civilization applies with equal justification to Kashmiri Pandit community. To quote him:

> *"Generally a widow, economically dependent on members of her husbands family, could be ill treated and abused, sometimes blamed for an unhappy occurrence in the family... She had to work hard and put up with all kinds of indignities and humiliation from seniors, sometimes, junior house hold members. And if this were not sufficiently disregarding, she was considered inauspicious"*[53].

Not to talk in terms of degree or magnitude widowhood both among the Muslims and the Hindus was treated as a big family disaster and misfortune. This is also evidenced from the folk expressions where in, it is wished and prayed that the husband of a lady should remain alive with a smile on his face.

The commonest and the best way of blessing a married women in Kashmiri folk expression is

"Deke ruzy nei vara"
"Deke pushy nei vensi"
"Deke prezelinei vensi"

[Let your forehead (symbolising husband) remain safe and secure for all the times.
Let your life partner remain by your side in all thin and thick
Let the shine of your forehead remain bright for all the times].

The worst possible curse which a Kashmiri women would give out of intense animosity and hatred to her enemy is that "let she become widow". In vernacular it is expressed as

"Mowande vedal getchynei"
"Peyi nei mondetion karun"

(You be destroyed like a widow
Let you live life of a widow)

Adoption

In order to mange an alternative for the natural heir, Kashmiri Muslims resorted to somewhat secular arrangement known as *'Pisri parwardahi'*[54]. According to this system a male kinsmen or tribes man was appointed as a heir by a sonless proprietor to inherit his property. But the institution received little appreciation of the society as is evident from this proverb;

"Yi watchi taluk kari
Ti kati kari betchi taluk"[55]

(what a person can expect from his natural heir,
can not expect from adopted one)

In a published doctoral thesis Altaf Ahmad Ahngar gives his impression of the institution in the following words"

> *"Among Muslim agricultural tribes of Kashmir, customary appointment of a heir is in no sense connected with religion and is purely a secular arrangement resorted to by a sonless owner of land in order to nominate a person to succeed him as his heir. The object is not to secure any religious benefit for the soul of the appointer but to obtain a practical and temporal benefit*[56].

Relations between various family members

From an attentive analysis of different categories of Kashmiri folk literature we find that there emerge certain stereotyped pictures of each relationship over and time again. For instance the, *'Hash'* and *'Zam'* and *'Bei kakeny'* will be found behaving with each other in the same way in innumerable songs. Though the folk literature provides several pictures of a relationship, each of these has certain specific features which are repeated in more or less the same combinations. To go back to our example, the relations between the *'Hash'* and *'Nosh'* (sas and Bahu) are portrayed as discordant in majority of the songs while in few songs the relations between the two are shown as cordial. A study of these variations adds to the understanding about a

relationship derived from the study of its typical depictions. Let us now consider the relationship one by one.

Mother and Daughter

In Kashmiri oral literature, we seldom find a women wishing to be a mother of a girl but the moment she is horn, it captivates the heart of a mother. A Kashmiri mother is seen more inclined towards daughter than the son particularly at the marriageable stage. The *"wanvun"* songs sung at the time of departure describe in a very touching way the separation between the mother and the daughter. The following verses from a departure song show mother's concern for her daughter well being in her husbands house.

Az tam rechmekh dowad tei dane
Khanei mejī ghar getche khei
Kihey chak dilas tei konei chak bavān.
Kyazi chak tchali tchali osh travan, Aadench kurei
khasi soane takhtasBakhts geye bederiye[57].

(Until now I have brought you up with milk and butter,
Now the time has come for you to depart your parental home.
Why don't you express freely to your mother?
What grieves you inwardly my daughter?
You are destined to live a happy married life, This is indicated
by the golden decorated doli awaiting you in the courtyard).

The daughter also seems aware of the magnitude of her mothers love towards her. This can be culled from the songs in which a girl, in her husbands place, tells about her miserable life in the 'veriv' (susral) to her brother who had gone there. In nearly all such songs the girl asks her brother not to tell about it to her mother, for it would be unbearable for her. The following lines occur in several 'Rov' and 'Vanvun' songs.

Bhayl ēsem chenl sath tel,
Mo cho gomotch watchos dottol.
Maji yuth nō wanakh kenh tei,
Be ha vendei hetik rath tei.[58]

(O, my brother, you are the sole source of my consolation,
I am betrayed and broken in my husbands house!
But don't reveal my sad plight to my mother,
I will die if you reveal my condition to my mother).

A motherless daughter is always seen broken in tears particularly in her *"Veriv"* (susral). If her brother fails to visit her veriv for long, she is shown in the songs as addressing to the wind around to convey her impressions of sadness and loneliness to her father and brother. If incidentally she meets any close or distant acquaintance, she does not miss the opportunity to reveal him or her miseries and woes.

zēry gowagleo maliyun ketey,
Māliyun myon tule mului vetey
Shetch hai sōzās kāvas athey[59]
Kiho kāvō ōy nō ethey.

(Does any one know where my parental home is?
Let me tell, it is on the way to tullamulla.
If I see none whom I know! I will send the message through crow,
Oh, crow, you will hardly be misled to reach the destiny my parental home)

In yet another *'chakri beth'* (Folk choral song) how a motherless daughter consoles herself is expressed in a very touching manner.

Bebe myane zinde roz panei,
Jan vendeyo yari jananei.
Maji malyon yelichu asanei,[60]
Raja malyon teli chu basanei, Mej panei chi taslah diwanei.
(O, my father, I prey for your long life,
In case mother is alive,
Parental home looks nothing less than a royal abode,
Mother is a great source of love and compassion).

Contrary to this cordial relationship that exists between the mother and the daughter, we find constant protests of a daughter in our folk tales against the step mothers harsh treatment. There is a famous Kashmiri proverb where in a step mother is equated with wild wolf or jackal.

"Voawre mej gei ven shej"[61] In almost all folk tales which feature the antagonised relationship between the children and the step mother, children particularly female children are often shown grudging against the inhuman approach and the maltreatment of the stepmother's. In some of such tales, a step mother does not even hesitate to poison[62] the step children out of unimaginable grudge and hatred. However, it is this variation and contrast that provides real touch to otherwise ornamental literary creations. These literary expressions not only depict the over all mood of the society but these creations help in understanding the social pulse of the concerned society.

Beside being projected as an embodiment of noble human virtues, mother, in Kashmiri folk literature is presented as an effective tool of character formation. In one of the Kashmiri proverbs, she is compared with potter. (Moj geyi krej)- Mother is just like a potter. The way potter makes and moulds the raw mud to give new shapes and styles of his pots, in the same way mother displays her responsibilities in fashioning the character of her children. For her utmost love, compassion and selflessness, children in Kashmiri society are more inclined to their mothers than to their father. This is also endorsed by different folk expressions used as pledges and vows to attach more reliability and weightage to ones commitments. She is always seen painfully conserved for the general welfare and the happiness of her children[63]. In different folk

forms mother is always pictured as an unmatching symbol of sacrifice and servitude. The mothers concern for her children is also depicted delicately in these folk verses.

Tchope kerō, Tchope karō
Rowani neri garyō,
Karo mej lejyō, hō nete hō.
Astanan zalei tile pej,
Mastana mej lej yō.
Chani bapth ves me gēj[64]

(Stop crying! Stop crying,!
I will adore your arms with variety of silver ornaments.
O, my hope, I am ready to sacrifice my life for you).
(I will offer heavy quantity of oil for the illumination of the shrine,
What then if I have to undergo torture and trouble to reach to a distant shrine!
You know that I have been robbed off all my valuable possessions for you).

Hash and Nosh Relations (Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relations).

One of the most intriguing relationship we find in Kashmiri folk literature is that of "Hash and Nosh" (mother-in-law and daughter-in-law). It is a relationship portrayed as one of mistrust, doubt, animosity and disintegrity. Kashmiri folk literature both in prose and poetry abound in references to the oppressive behavioural style of *'Hash'* and how it affects the entire gamut of emotional scheme of family life has been the subject of major chunk of Kashmiri folk songs[65]. In addition to this there is a sizeable number of folk sayings and proverbs in use even today which tell us about the unpleasant relationship between the *'Hash'* and the *'Nosh'*. See for example these proverbs:-

i) "Hash to thez Nosh ti thez
Deg dez te vale kus"

ii) "Heshi hendy ti doh tchor
Te noshi hendy to doh tchor"

iii) "Nosh beni ne kur
Hash beni ne moj"

iv) "Nosh demie phoher
Hashi demie budith"

i) (Since both mother-in-law and daughter-in-law equally claim high pedigree, none is ready to remove a boiling pot from the burning stove which is ready to be spoilt).

ii) (In their own turn, both mother-in-law and daughter-in-law enjoy dictatorial positions in the family)

iii) (Neither daughter-in-law is any substitute for daughter nor mother-in-law can replace mother in love and devotion).

iv) (Remember, daughter-in-law I have given you a spoilt food I know, O my mother-in-law, I will pay you in the same coin when you grew old and grey).

It appears from the study of folk songs that the *"hash"* considers it to be her right to order about and scold the *"nosh"*. Examples from folk songs of such assertions by the *'Hash'* are innumerable. The *'Hash'* may not say such things in real life but her desire to rule over the *'Nosh'* is well known.

References regarding conflict between *'Hash'* and *'Nosh'* abound in Kashmiri folk literature. There are number of tales also that describe the cruelties of the hash. In some of the tales, *'Nosh'* is shown as taking her revenge when she is in a position to do so or when she feels sure of her husbands support and patronage. In the following folk song *'Hash'* is shown as poisoning the ears of her husband's daughter against the newly married daughter-in-law.

Hange mange bednām nosh bichari
Hashi hendy kharei kya wanei
Ōre yiwani wonenam heras
Nosh chei seras bhate khewān
Ōre yiwāni wonenam zēmei
Dowahas nei meny nam kemikanh.[66]

(My mother-in-law levelled baseless allegations
against me,
How could I recall the countless ill machinations of
my mother-in-law.
Without losing a minute, she complained about
my over eating to my father-in-law,
She even poisoned my husband's sister about
my unfounded noncompliance of her dictates).

Not in tune with the established notion the content of some other proverbs and sayings suggest that the presence of the *'Hash'* in a family and her taunting tune worked as a corrective against manifold family evils. Her presence in the family marked the discipline and order in the family life of Kashmir. By not allowing her daughter-in-law to indulge in non serious and meaningless pursuits, she played a positive role in bringing domestic peace and the prosperity of the family. It is perhaps, of this creative function that the presence of a *'Hash'* in the family has been appreciated by the society. This is evidenced by the following folk sayings and the proverbs:-

i) "Hash ros ghara go peshe ros ler"
ii) "Hash ne zam wajare gam"
iii) "Verheji maktche per nei asi noshi nei
asi hash tei zam"

i) (A family without mother-in-law is just like a house without roof.
ii) In absence of mother-in-law and sister-in-law family presents a deserted look).
iii) (Mother-in-law and sister-in-law is to daughter-in-law what an axe is to hard log of wood).

From the indepth study of Kashmiri marriage songs 'Wanvun', we are guided to observe that at the time of daughters departure for her husbands house along with the 'barat' party, she is repeatedly advised by her mother to serve her mother-in-law

in the same way as she treated her own mother. The same feeling is expressed in these lines of Kashmiri 'Wanvun' song

Hash cheny ametch halam dēry derī,
Kery zes piyale berdery ye,

(O my daughter, your mother in law had
come here with high hopes,
You are advised to show complete
submission, obedience and respect to her).

One of the most striking reason for this kind of unpleasant relations between *'Hash'* and *'Nosh'* as I perceived after examining some marriage songs, seems to be rested more on the material reasoning than on the traditional stereotyped relation between the sas and the behu. In Kashmir during the period under reference, all marriage expenses were exclusively borne by the parents of the bridegroom, therefore, the mother and the sister of the husband took it as a matter of right to dictate terms and conditions to their newly married bride. They treated her not as a respectable member of the family but as an ordinary market commodity that was purchased against the cash payment. It is why she was to act as a drudge from dawn to dusk, going to distant jungles to bring firewood on her head and on her return from the distant woods, she was often asked to pound shali in a stone mortar with wooden pestles. The pain she would experience from dawn to dusk domestic pursuits is depicted in a very touching style in this mortar song (Kanze beth).

Yete legim,
Hete khetchem,
Bhangi vetches,
Tchangi khethes,
Dur legis, Hur gegis,
Tapa dezes, chite chi[67].

(Continuous pounding the rice from down to
dusk with redoubled body movements caused
skin cracks in my hands,

I have been married distant away,
My youth and beauty faded out abruptly!
I feel exhausted in the mid day scorching heat).

In some of the *'Rov'* songs we find a deviation and a contrast to traditional unpleasant relationship between the *'Hash'* and the *'Nosh'*. There are number of folk songs where a *'Nosh'* has been shown praising her *'Hash'* for her civility and gentleness. Few lines of one such song I record here for reference.

Khīr dowad tei shaybat chāvanavān,
Mōj hash chem rnage range renzenāvān.
Ayi Qurān Sehras Perenavān,
Maji mēlis āye cham manganavan.[68]

(My mother-in-law frequently offers me different kinds of sweet dishes,
She entertains me in a variety of ways.
She convincingly induces me to recite the Quran every day early in morning,
She asks me to offer special prayers for the well being of my parents).

This contrasting explanation of the *'Hash'* and *'Nosh'* relations led us to maintain that the reason behind the repeated protest of the *'Nosh'* against the teasing attitude of the *'Hash'* was perhaps due to the fact that usually an unmarried daughter in her parental home was treated with exemplary love and affection. Her petty liking and interests were taken care of. She would feel disturbed in her husbands home at the notice of even a slightest deviation to the treatment she was used to at the hands of her parents. In such a seemingly unbalanced situation a newly married bride could not help but to protest in an exaggerated way even at slightest stingy remarks of her husbands parents[69].

Village Women pounding the ***Shali*** (unhusked rice)
with pestles in the stone mortar.

Zam-kakeny (Relation between bride and her husband's sister)

A Relationship between Zam and Beikakeny (bride and sister-in-law) as depicted in Kashmiri folk literature is no less a strained and quarrelsome relation then that of *'Hash'* and *'Zam'*. At times the relation between the two assumes such an alarming position which would result in the total disintegration of the Kashmiri family life. The sister of the husband who used to enjoy a privileged status before her brother was married finds herself in somewhat changed situation and she holds her sister-in-law responsible for her brothers alienation. She poisons the ears of her father and mother against the wife of her brother and in turn they start teasing their daughter-in-law. Immediately after the marriage of a son, in almost majority of the Kashmiri families particularly in lower middle classes, the process of disintegration starts in the family. The zam as shown in the literature does not leave any stone unturned to tease and taunt her 'Beikakeny'[70]. There is a Kashmiri proverb which indicates to this state of social affairs.

"zām hei asi gām tati peth sozes pam"

(How does it matter, if zam is married distant away,
She will seldom miss an opportunity to tease her sister-in-law)

Under such disturbing conditions the only way left for a "Bheikakeny" was to leave for 'Maliyun' (parental home). The pain caused by the long enforced separation is expressed in number of Kashmiri 'Rov songs'.

Lolan temy sendy dath cham kermetch
Deth cham kermetch.
Tas kemy bery nam kan tei lō lō
Hai bēli yaras vente lō lō.
Keli gethi yawun zaye tei lō lō
Doh gō bālas tchaye lō lō.[71]

(His (husbands) separation had plunged me into deep grief,

Who had poisoned his ears?__ I know it is his sister.
O, my bosom friend, please convey my heartfelt impressions
to my life partner,
The bloom of any youth will go waste- How painful
It is to live separately!
The sun of my youth is about to set in).

In number of Kashmiri folk tales, *zam* is frequently shown levelling false charges against her brother's wife. She often makes her brother suspicious about the chastity of his wife. Perhaps its most striking example is furnished in this Kashmiri folk balled "Zam Hendy Zulum". Some of the lines of this long poem is given here for reference.

Maji henz ēses khanei mōji,
Veriv gari kiya gudrun piyom.
Shine mēny tapan heni heni geyis,
Maji henz eses khanei mōj.
Dur shaharas legnes dekenei,
Kotah kruth pyom azleilon.
Zem bo nehkei hantchan lēgis,
Maji henz eses khanei mōj[72].

(I was the sole object of love in my parental home,
How can I reveal the magnitude of pain, experienced in
my husbands house?
I was allowed to melt down like a slate of frozen ice in
a scorching sun heat.
It was destined that I was married distant away,
How painful my fortune proved!
My 'Zam' levlled unfounded allegations of immorality
against me).

In multiple of Kashmiri folk tales the role of "Bhei kakeny" has also been painted in a black colour. She is shown taking her revenge against the zam immediately after the death of her father-in-law or mother-in-law. The death of a father or mother is no less a death for the unmarried daughter. Now it is the turn of

'Bhei kakeny' to poison her husband against his sister. The indifferent altitude of the 'bhabi' towards her zam on the occasion of latters marriage's is depicted in the following lines of a Kashmiri marriage song.

Huri cha nērun veriv kuneye,
Bheyis veny tos pate neres.
Bhabi keti ches bihit kuny zenyye,
Bheyis veny tos pate neres.[73]
OR
Moji ros korey menz cha attenei,
Kona chive wataney zul kerith.[74]

(A beauteous bride like fairy is about to leave for her husbands house,
Tell her brother to see her off!
Does any one know where her bhabi has confined herself on this auspicious event?
Tell her brother to see her off,

OR

O mother less bride, mehendi on your hands is still fluidy,
It is sad not to have streets illuminated on the auspicious day like marriage).

In Kashmiri folk tales and in some of the songs, we often find that a mother less bride prefers to live in her husbands house to avoid her jealous and arrogant *'Bhei kakeny'*.

But the references are not wanting too about the exemplary love and devotion of a bhabi towards her orphan zam. In a folk story *"Damane Tchroth Asun"* we find that a *Bheikakeny* discharges the role of a real mother in arranging the marriage of a *zam* and in order to console her *zam* she even offers her jewellery to her.

Brother and Sister

The relation between brother and sister is portrayed as extremely affectionate in the various forms of Kashmiri folk literature. But there is a proverb in Kashmiri

language *"Beni geyi theny to Boyi go keny"* which means sister is as sober and mild as butter and brother is as hard as stone. This similarity though predominantly find expression in the day to day behavioural pattern of the brother and sister relations, one can not ignore the indepth love an average Kashmiri brother possess for her sister. In different Kashmiri marriage songs the sister express the wish that her brother should accompany her to husbands house at the time of her marriage. If a brother fails to visit her married sister, she gets restless and frustrated as is revealed in different Kashmiri *'Rov'* songs. The visit of a brother to her married sisters house brings her new hope and pleasure. In a folk story *'Lole Metch'*[75] a sister is shown feeling afresh and relieved to see her brother in the courtyard of her husbands house. In yet another Kashmiri folk tale *Beni te Boy*[76] leaves her husbands house madly without seeking the permission of family elders, when she comes to know that her brother has been caught in a trouble. On seeing his wife so concerned towards her brother, her husband also cultivates an indepth love towards his wife's brother. The intense love of a brother-in-law towards the brother of his wife is well depicted in this Kashmiri folk saying.

'Betchen manzekusu chi toth heher'
"Bata manza kheh chuy tath tehar".

(In family relations none excells brother-in-law in love and affection).
(Among rice dishes, Tehr is unmatching).

Husband wife Relation

The indepth study of different forms of Kashmiri folk literature tend us to maintain that woman as a wife in a Kashmiri peasant set society was not given her due respect[77]. This is also depicted by a famous Kashmiri proverb.

"Zanane geyi brande keny"

(The status of a wife is nothing more than
a stone of an outer entrance of a house)

In context of Kashmiri social life as was stated earlier, she was treated nothing more than a drudge or the hired domestic servant. In rural Kashmir her position as a wife was more pitiable. She was assign d every kind of rough and rustic job. In some well off families both among the Muslims and the Hindus, she was not allowed to enter into a dialogue with her husband in presence of the family elders[78]. She was to seek prior permission of the family elders before she could meet any member of her parental side on his visit to her home. She was often made subject to severe humiliation even for petty lapses by every member of the husband's family. If any unpleasant occurrence happened there in the family, she was usually held responsible for that. She was supposed to get up early in the morning and was not allowed to go to her bed chamber before the completion of the days home task[79]. Her domestic engagements include among other things, husking of Shali in a stone mortar; (Kanz) cooking every item of the Kashmiri's dietary day calendar, sweeping the entire house and the adjacent courtyards and the lawns; cleansing the utensils; washing clothes of all the family members; bringing water n earthen pitchers from distant or nearby river ghats, making beddings for all the family members etc. etc. In addition to this, she was also desired to bring firewood from the distant jungles for daily use and the storing for winter days. This dawn to dusk busy schedule of domestic engagements would often tell upon her health and this is substantiated by the horrible accounts of European medical missionaries who visited the valley time and again during the period under reference. According to the Kashmiri Medical Missionary society report within twelve months of woman doctor Fanny Butler's stay in Srinagar she treated

five thousand women patients. Paying rich tributes to Fanny Butler for her noble task of treating ailing Kashmiri women, Mark L.G. Wilson writes:

> *"For ten long years, the Kashmiri women, who wept bitterly for their doctor 'Miss Sahib, waited for such another to minister to their sufferings*[80].

Not only under feeding, over work and the ill treatment of the elders towards them constituted some of the major causes for the worsening of the physical charms of Kashmiri women, but equally torturing was the pain caused by the long absence of their husbands who had either been sent forcibly fully to under take the inhuman task of *'Begar'* or had voluntarily migrated to Punjab at the outset of winter to earn the necessary livelihood for their dependents. The pains and pang of this category of forlorn women of Kashmir find pathetic expression in different Kashmiri folk songs. In the following folk song, Kashmiri women express intense desire for the early return of their male members from Punjab.

> Kam gander Punjāb ander keshiri taran nā,
> Kam gander sowander sowander keshiri taran nā,
> Bare gemety peymety pather keshir taran nā,
> Harde wavey phoruk kajer keshiri taran nā[81].
>
> (A sizeable number of Kashmiri youth had gone to the
> plains of Punjab, we prey for their safe and early return,
> They were the beautiful lot among the Kashmiri youth.
> They might be feeling home sick now,
> Before the winter set in, they had migrated to Punjab,
> we prey for their safe and early return).

In yet another *'Rov'* song, women lament deeply for the long absence of their male partners who had been sent for begar and nothing was known of their where abouts:-

Mot hei poshan geyom yōr konei āv,
Rōzi roshan geyou yōr konei āv.
Nejde balan ketchom yor konei āv
Shere legith geyom yor konei āv.[82]

(My life partner had been taken away forcibly to go across the high mountain summits,
In a broad mid day light, he left us mournful!
Why didn't he seek my permission before undertaking such a hazardous journey?
Of course, he consoled me with a warm kiss on my fore head!
I wish I could see him as early as possible!).

To quote Lawrence,

> *"The Kashmiri wife is a real helpmate, and joint work and joint interest give rise to a camaraderie between man and wife which is very healthy"*[83].

But the statement of Lawrence, when judged in the light of contemporary literature fall short of merit and qualification. A close scrutiny of Kashmiri folk tales tend us to hold that the relationship between the husband and wife was not exclusively one of friendship, cordiality and mutual trust. We find scores of tales which predominantly feature the quarreling nature of their relationship. The details are not also wanting regarding the feminine frailty which often resulted in the litigations and the divorces[84].

Moral laxity

In an atmosphere of political despondency, social degradation, physical-in security coupled with the feudal sensual tastes, one can not ignore altogether the presence of licentious and scandalous traits among the Kashmiri women during the period under review.

The legacy of the Afghan rule characterised by the sensual make-up continued

with redoubled vigour during the Sikh and the Dogra Rule[85]. Commenting on the licentious tastes of Afghan rulers Pandit Ramjoo Dhar states, 'No beautiful or married women could pass through streets unmolested'[86].

Under abject poverty, a class of Kashmiri women did not hesitate from exhibiting their bodily charms before the affluent traders and businessmen[87]. there existed a class of Kashmiri women who worked as professional prostitutes known as *'gani's* or *malzadis*. During the Sikh period there sprang two colonies, one each at Guru Bazar and Shaheed Gunj which attracted ladies in anklets[88]. With the passage of time, these localities, during the period under reference became the main centres of flesh trade in Kashmir[89]. The notoriety of the trade assumed such a magnitude that folk bards composed satirical rhymes to express their indignation against the institution. See for example;

> Yi duniya chi Narsingh garch malzat,
> Akis sethy doweh tei akis sethy rath.
>
> (The world is like a Narsinghgarh flesh women at sale, To live with one during day and with the other during the night).

These girls according to G.T. Vigne were not only used by the Sikhs for their own entertainment[90] but even for all those travellers who visited valley during the period of our study. To quote P.N.Bazaz:

> *"when the land was over run by the armies of Mughals, Afghans and Sikhs, women suffered along with all other people. Men took advantage of chaotic political conditions to enslave women. Hence from the very beginning the oppression was the common lot of women in Kashmir but in the first half of the nineteenth century it touched its highest magnitude"*[91].

Equally yet another saddest aspect of Kashmiri society was the trafficking[92] in women. Victor Jacqumount who visited the valley during the Sikh rule reports that "girls were sent to outside the state to stock the harems of Musalman, Sikhs and the Hindus"[93]. To quote W.G. Osborne, "Ranjit Singh received beautiful girls as a tribute from Kashmir"[94]. According to J.Wolf, "The women were sold and purchased like pieces of bread"[95]. Jacquemont gives the horrifying details of Kashmiri girls at sale. He writes :

> *"All little girls who promised to turn out pretty were sold at eight years of age and taken to the Punjab and other parts of India. Their parents sold them for a petty sum of fifty to sixty rupees*[96].

But the investigations reveal that the trade was exclusively run by the members of the "wattal" community[97]. I had a chance to listen few lines of a satirical song at village 'Pohru' during my field survey, which also refer to the same fact. The few lines of the song are recorded here for reference.

Asmane vesi na threth watlan tei,
Nani vane koriyan karan bapār.
Lānet vasān mā chak gānen tei,
Nani vane koriyan karān bapār.
Mand chan machik dralez khenesei,
Kōriyn sozān vech te Punjāb.
Ras kiya chi lagan tchor patchan tei,
Nani vane koriyan karan bapār.

(Let the houses of the wattals reduce te ashes due to fire!
Because, they publicly put their daughters on sale.
They deserve extreme degree of disgrace and curse,
Because, they publicly put their daughters on sale.
the persons involved in the trade get huge money as a commission charge,
By sending the little girls to the plains of Punjab.
The money they receive in the exchange,
This spend on drinking and dancing).

G.T.Vigni and Fredrick Drew also attest this observation. To quote vigne, "The girls of wattal tribe were mainly sold and sent as slaves to the Punjab"[98].

With the passing of political fortunes of the state from the Sikhs to the Dogras in 1846, the valley witnessed no significant change in the attitudinal make-up of the aristocratic circle. Kashmiri beauty continued to lure the aristocratic craze. The institution of Hafiza which once symbolised the mark of civility and aristocratic etiquette degenerated into brothel during the rule of Jammu Dogras[99]. In close proximity to the official Dogra quarter at Srinagar, Maisuma emerged as one of the major spots of flesh trade in Kashmir[100]. In the thirties of the present century the infamous trade outraged the citizens so much that one man, Muhammad Sabhan, a barber by profession launched a one man but fierce fight against it and subsequently, it was banned in 1934. Here I quote few lines of one of the popular folk song, Sabhana sung in condemnation to the prostitutes of Maisuma.

Pump shus shubinā yiman gane delenei,
Gane byōl gatenei galenei av.
Navi chene kanh yiwan pranieu hyot tehclenay,
Gane byol galenei galenei av.
(It does not behave proper for prostitutes to wear pump shoes,
The infamous institution shall be soon uprooted from the soil of Kashmir.
No, new prostitute takes admission in the brothel,
The infamous institution is about to die).

The last phase of the Dogra period was a witness to number of socio-religious reform moments, which intended among other things to liberate the Kashmiri women from the variety of abuses she had fallen into[101].

Alongside the Christian women missionaries, the organisation known as "Fraternity"[102], framed by progressive Kashmiri Pandits, played an important role for the overall welfare of Kashmiri women.

Hafiza – *in her informal Kashmiri attire*

Hafiza – *about to take off for a dance*

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. "Women, position in society" ***Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences***, Vol. XV, p.443.

2. Ved, Kumari Ghai, ***The Nilmata Purana*** (Eng) translation. Vol.I p.90. P.N. Bazaz, ***Daughters of Vitasta***, p.3.

3. Ibid.

4. M. Ishaq Khan, ***Kashmir's Transition to Islam***, p.245

5. S.L. Shali, ***Kashmir History and Archaeology through the Ages***, p.287. According to Pt. Ramjoo Dhar, No beautiful or married women could pass through streets unmolested: ***Kifiat-i-Intizam-i-Mulk-i-Kashmir,*** f.4.

   In Governor Abdullah Khans time such incidents occurred very frequently. Syed Bazruk Shah raised his voice against the ruler Abdullah Khan but still the Afghan governor did not hesitate indulging in such activities. Moorcroft, MS. EURD-264. p.88.

6. Bazaz, Op.Cit., p.242.

7 M.Y. Teng, *"Keshur Culture Luke Betan Hendis Enes Manz"* ***Anhar***, Kashmir Department, pp.27-37.

8. J. H. Knowles, ***Folk Tales of Kashmir***, p.172. "Two Brothers".

9. Moti Lal Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol. 4, p.39; Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol. 3, p.26.

10. The major Chunk of Kashmiri cradle Songs are composed in praise and appreciation of the male babies. There are very few songs in all folk song collections which feature the parental concern and affection for female babies. The lines of the song under reference have been collected from Sakina of Dalgate. The oral recording of the song lies with the researcher.

11. Unpublished Manzely Beth, gathered from Shamima of Zooni Mar Soura Srinagar.

12. M.L. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol. 3, p.44.

13. Unpublished Wanvun collected from Haproo Batapora, a village situated about thirty Kilometers away from Srinagar.

14. J.H. Knowles, Op.Cit., *"All for Painsa"* p. 147. Walter Lowrence, ***Valley of Kashmir***, p.267. According to Bazaz:

"It was an unusual sight to see a boy..... unmarried at the age of fifteen, custom disapproved of keeping a girl under parental roof after she had passed twelve summers of life. It was a sin to have a virgin of marriagable age in house".

Bazaz, ***Daughters of vitasta***, p.221.

15. Mar Walter Del, ***The Romantic East***, p.177. The writer holds that girls are married as early as the age of seven and the co-habition is general at twelve and some times as early as nine. Also seen Pt. Anand Koul, ***The Kashmiri Pandit***, p.32.

16. This song was revealed to me by a young lady Zamrooda, at village Bandipora, District Baramulla. The song is put to record for the first time. It is not referred to in any of the folk song collection.

17. Source same.

18. The different expressions in the context under reference stand for innocent, delicate and minor girls who are yet to reach the puberty age. In Wanvun songs, Kashmiri girls often use these expressions to register their silent protest against their family elders.

19. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.109.

20. G.N. Atish, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol. 8, p.121; ***Keshir Luke Beth***. Vol. 4, p.31, 40, 51, 60; J.H. Knowles, Op.Cit, p.29; Nishal Ansari, ***Keshiri Luke Kathe***, Vol. 4, p.81; Tyndale Biscoe, ***Kashmir in Sun Light and Shade***, pp.132-133; S.N. Dhar, ***Tales of Kashmir***, p.280; *"Told by Rahti"*, Walter Lawrence, ***The Valley of Kashmir***, 269; Brides did not generally see their bridegrooms before the marriage occassion. Sant Ram Dogra, Op.Cit., pp.7-9; Parbway Florence- ***The Emerald set with the pearls***, p.67.

21. Very often extreme poverty led parents to marry their daughters to aged and ailing persons despite the girls unwillingness. The unmatching alliance is often made subject of great ridicule and contempt by the sensible womenfolk in Wanvun songs. See how a Kashmiri girl in one of the folk tales express her mind on such unhealthy conjugal alliance.

"My mother is old, she is bent on having my betrothal performed with an old man, who had already lost his teeth and has three wives. He is no doubt, rich; he will pay her one thousand rupees for me and he will arrange the wedding on our side - it is too bad".

S.N. Dhar, ***Tales of Kashmir*** , *"Robin Hood of Kashmir"*, P.121.

22. Bazaz, Op.Cit., p.221. Kashmiri pandits considered the early marriage of the children not only a proper discharge of a religious duty but as one bringing credit to the family which practiced it. See Anand Koul, ***The Kashmiri Pandit***, p.32.

23. Lawrence, ***Valley***, Op.Cit, pp.267.

24. Bazaz, Op.Cit., pp.202-205.

25. Ibid., p.221.

26. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol. 4, p.254.

27. Farooq Fayaz, *"Causes of Muslim Backwardness in the Domain of Education"*, paper presented in a seminar organised by Kashmir Research Foundation at State Institute of Education. See also Bazaz, Op.Cit., p. 24.

28. Kashmiri folk literature particularly folk tales abound in references regarding the anti-ethical pursuits of Kashmiri women who were wedded against their wishes. For example see *"Vendetta"*, ***Tales of Kashmir***, p. 259. S.N. Dhar . ***Keshir Luke Beth,*** Vol. 8, p. 262. ***Keshiri Luke Kathe,*** Vol. 2, p.12.

29. Anhar, ***Luke Adab Number***, *"Keshur Culture Luke Betan Hendis Enes Manz"* p.37.

30. Farooq Fayaz, *"Keshri Zanane Kesheren Luke Betan Manz"*, talk presented from Radio Kashmir Srinagar. Audio recording vide tape No. SR/= 3780/. Programme Saqafat.

31. These folk explanations qualify the equality of economic status and position. Among the lower middle Muslim families in Kashmir, preference in the process of matrimonial selection was given to the family of equal socio-economic level and position.

32. The assertion that polygamy was common in Kashmir during the period under review falls short of merit and qualification on the ground that it was effected almost in a situation of dire socio-emotional need. Even in Muslim elite families, it was treated as an anti-ethical exercise to go for second marriage in presence of the first wife unless conditioned by unavoidable need and necessity. The economic poverty which was the general rule during the period of our study could have never allowed people particularly belonging to middle or lower rung of the society to go for more than one spouse.

33. In a feudal set-up, the existence of co-wives generally stands for economic well being and aristocratic taste. In a grip of psychological predominance, the lower strata always attempted to barrow the social niceties of their overlords that is why we find in abundance the expression *"Sowan"* in vernacular. The frequent usage of the word may be taken as a corrective against any unforeseen emotional imbalance that is generally caused by the presence of a co-wife in any family composition.

34. G.T. Vigne, ***Travels***, Vol.2 p.143. Also see peer Hassan Shah, ***Tarikh-i-Hassan,*** Vol.II, P.227. R.K. Parimu, *A History of Muslim Ruk in Kashmir,* p.439.

35. A.L. Basham, ***The Wonder That Was India***, p.179. Purdah in the local expression does not only mean a special garment meant to cover the face of a Muslim women, it in the wider sense of the term is mostly used for Sharmo-Haya or unpublic image of the Muslim woman. In tune with the Muslim elite culture, Kashmiri aristocratic Pandits also adopted a type of concealment for their ladies in the wake of the Muslim rule in Kashmir. It was done more under the aristocratic craze than by any religions merit or necessity. That is why Moorcroft and Vigne do not support the theory that Hindu women also adopted Purdah during the period under reference. Moorcraft, ***Travels***, Vol.11, p.131. G.T. Vigne, ***Travels***, Vol.II, p.143.

36. **Ibid.**

37. **Ibid.**

38. The recording of the song is preserved in Radio Archives library vide SR/= 7421. Programme *Nagme vuzen Neeryn te Nayen.*

39. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.V.p.21.

40. This is evidenced by number of Kashmiri working songs (Kami Kareky beth) published in various folk song collections. Ballads like Greesy Koer, Krale Koer, Phely Koer, etc. etc. also attest our assertion that Kashmiri women actively shared the socio-economic responsibility in the Kashmiri family life. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol, 4, p.65. G.N. Atish, Op. Cit., p.111. Saqi, Op.Cit., Vol.III. p.28. Knowks, Op. Cit., p.231. See for elaborate detail ***Various Trades in Kashmir***, Op. Cit., 1078-1781.

41. Famous Kashmiri folk singer Gulam Mohammad Dar of Sathu Bagwanpora, Bar Bar Shah who had the privilege of presenting this folk balled in Uzbikistan Russia during one of his cultural trips, revealed to me that this Chakri song was highly applauded by the Uzbek people present in the auditorium.

42. S. N. Dhar, *"Benediction"* ***Tales of Kashmir***, p.146. J. H.Knowles, *"A Stupid Boy"* ***Folk Tales of Kashmir***, p.189; Naeve. E. F., ***Beyond the Pir Punjal,*** p.240.

43. G. N. Aatish, Op.Cit., p.117.

44. These folk sayings which are in circulation even today are suggestive of the teasing and taunting behaviour of the family members towards the widow.

45. Sources at hand reveal that widows in Muslim families often preferred to look after their minor children than to go for remarriage. Such widows were held in high esteem. To earn their livelihood and support the dependents, these widows often resorted to the occupation of maiden servants in the well-off families of Kashmiri Pandits and the Muslims well off families. For reference see Knowles, Op.Cit., p.189; Saqi, Op.Cit., Vol.III, p.21; B. A. Dabla, ***Working Women in***

Kashmir, p.33; Verma Mathur, *Position of Women in Ancient and Medieval Kashmir*, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, submitted to the Jammu University.

46. **Ibid.**

47. Since Kashmir was famous all over the world for the delicate and finest texture and embroidery work of Shawl, it as such accommodated good number of female folk in the work of spinning. The destitute and forlorn Kashmiri women often earned their bread by working from dawn to dusk at the spinning wheel. In the time of distress and agony, the spinning wheel served as the sole trustworthy companion of Kashmiri women. Kashmiri women's unbroken emotional alliance with the wheel has given birth to scores of touching folk wheel songs of Kashmiri literature. These wheel songs (Yendre Nagme) contain the inner pain and the pulse of Kashmiri women. See for example:

Tose mey kotmei ha yendrō,
Lose nev thas ha myne yendrō,
Rafaqash Tchei chuhum ha yendrō
Jafaqash tchei chuhum ha yendrō
Gēn Gēn mō kar myani yendrō

(I have delicately spin the best quality of the shawl wool,
The dawn to dusk engagement with the spinning wheel has exhausted all my bodily energy.
Oh! my wheel, you are the only companion of my broken life!
My wheel is my only source of sustenance,
It does not look nice that my wheel will give a disturbing sound)

In Moorcraft's estimation there were about 100,000 women engaged in spinning wool till late in the night. Moorecraft William, ***MSEURD.***264, p.43.

48. The barren woman is believed to be inauspicious and is despised. In various Kashmiri sayings and proverbs, we find tearing references to the sad plight of the barren women. The barrenness of woman in Kashmiri Muslim families often led the couple for adoption. The institution though not in tune with the Islamic spirit, was well adhered to for obvious reasons during the period under debate.

Adoption is of Hindu origin and has been maintained among the Mohammadans in spite of all the bigoted attacks against this institution for the last six hundred years. The Zamindars of the valley still think an adopted son as good as heir as a real son. See for detailed information A. H. Ahanger, *Customary Succession Among Muslims in Kashmir*, pp.195-197. Also see Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.III, p.121. Ahsan, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.III, p.117.

49. Different oral sources tend us to suggest that most of the divorce cases which occurred in Muslim Kashmiri families happened more due to the machinations of Hash and Zaam.

50. There is a practice prevalent even today in Kashmir that the barren ladies are advised by their well-wishers to pay a visit to the shrine of Baba Payam-ud-Din at Tangmarg (Gulmarg). The concerned ladies plaster the mud daan (stove) of the shrine in a most purified way with the hope of being blessed with the off spring. After the wish is fulfilled, the concerned family members find themselves bound to visit the shrine with some offerings in the shape of sheep, jewelry or cash.

51. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.168.

52. Bazaz, Op.Cit., p.201. Anand Koul, ***The Kashmiri Pandit***, p.32. Bazaz, ***Inside Kashmir***, p.296.

53. Widow in Hindu family did not engage herself in any recreational pursuit. Dubious, Op.Cit., pp.356-357; A. B. Bose and H. L. A. Sen, *Some Characteristics of the Widows in Rural Society,* ***Man in India*** No.466, pp.226-232.

> *"The misery caused by this unnatural system of child widow hood can be better imagined than described and one of the saddest incidents of the cholera of 1890 is the number of girls who were left widows",*

Neve, E. F., ***Beyond the Pir Punjal,*** p.240. Neve further states that:

> *"Hindu widows had no right to marry. She had therefore, to stay in the house of her father-in-law, taking advantage of her helplessness, she was often compelled to live an unholy life. The children born to them were thrown, it is said, either in a river or to the pariah dog at night".*

Neve. E. F., Op.Cit., p.240.

54. The object of the institution seems not to secure any religious benefit for the soul of the appointer but to obtain a practical and temporal benefit. Altaf Ahangar - *Customary succession Among Muslims*, p.197.

55. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.4., p.90.

56. M. A. Ahangar, Op.Cit., p.197.

57. G. N. Atish, Op.Cit., p.97.

58. Shad Ramzan, ***Keshiren Luke Betan Hund Intikhab***, p.64.

59. Saqi, Op.Cit., Vol.4, p.62.

60. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.III, p.115.

61. **Woaremej** (Step Mother) as else where, in Kashmiri literature too is generally painted in the grey colour. I could not find the "saying" refereed to in the context

in any of the folk saying collection, but it was aired to me by one Salam Ganai of Tchoka pora, Tehsil Chadora during one of my field trip to that village.

62. Knowles, Op.Cit., p.202.

63. Nishat Ansari, ***Keshri Luke Kathe***, Vol.4, p.96; Saqi, Op.Cit., Vol.3, p.115,117, 184.

64. **Ibid.**, p.21.

65. In Kashmiri ballads and lyrical songs, the Hash appears to be intent on injuring the feelings of Nosh in various ways. Atish, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.9, p.51,92,111. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.4, p.29,71,95,96,99 ...

66. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.73; G. N. Nazir, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, p.44.

67. G. N. Atish, (Meol) ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.8, p.85.

68. This song was collected from Batapora, Zakoora. It is unpublished and put to record for the first time in the dissertation at hand.

69. Farooq Fayaz, ***"Keshri Zanane Luke Betan Manz"***, Radio talk vide programme Saqafat, Radio Kashmir, Srinagar.

70 M. L. Saqi, ***Keshir Luke Beth***, Vol.III, p.115.

71. In almost all genres of Kashmir folk literature *"Bei Kakeny"* (Brother's wife) has been shown as nursing grudge against the brothers and sisters of her husband.

72. This song I gathered from a lady namely Saida from Sheikhpora village, falling in District Pulwama. The village is some forty five kilometres away from Srinagar and is situated on the banks of Ranbi Ara Shupian. The song is not published in any folklore collection.

73. Source same.

74. Source same.

75. Nishat Ansari, Op.Cit., p.97.

76. This song was transmitted to me by Abdul Khaliq Thukeroo of village Jamnagri Tehsil Shupian.

77. In comparison to Urban woman, the woman as a wife in Kashmiri peasant society was often made subject to humiliation and disgrace. There are different reasons which had been already dealt in the body content of the chapter under debate.

78. This information was given to me by Gulla Wani, aged 92 at his residence Narbal Srinagar. The photograph of the narrator is enclosed with the dissertation. The information conveyed has been further substantiated by one lady, namely Azi of Bagwanpora Sathu, who now resides at Badshah Nagar, Nowgam.

79. J. H. Knowles, Op.Cit., p.75; ***Kashmir Today***, Vol.II, p.117; M.I.Khan, ***History of Srinagar***, p.111.

80. Quoted in ***Europeans on Kashmir***; Shafi Shauq and others, p.117.

81. Saqi, Op.Cit., Vol.3, p.80.

82. Shad Ramzan, Op.Cit., p.77.

83. Quoted in ***Europeans on Kashmir,*** p.181.

84. Vigne, Vol.II, p.85; G. Forester, Op.Cit., Vol.II, p.22; J.Wolf, Op.Cit., p.408; Brinkman, ***Wrongs in Kashmir***, Op.Cit., p.32; Saif-ud-din, Roznameha, Vol.VI, dated 15th September, 1853, f.104; Saqi, Op.Cit., Vol.III, p.242; J. H. Knowles, ***Folk Tales of Kashmir*** (A Strange Request), p.227; S. N. Dhar, ***Tales of Kashmir*** (The Ear Rings).

85. Robert Thorp, ***Cashmere Misgovernment***, p.70.

86. Ramjoo Dhar, *Kafiat-i-Intizam-i-Mulk-i-Kashmir,* Op.Cit., f.4.

87. G. T. Vigne, Op.Cit., Vol.II, p.85. For the entertainment of the traders there existed a class of public women congregated in Srinagar. These indulged freely in vices. See for details, Moti Chandra, ***Courtesans of Medieval India***, pp.180-185.

88. ***Sheeraza*** (Eng.). *"Photo Feature: Kashmiri "songstress"*. p.98.

89. Ibid. M.Y. Teing. M.I.Khan, ***History of Srinagar***, p.97.

90. Vigne , Op.Cit., Vol.II, p.85.

91. Bazaz, ***Daughters of Vitasta***, p.91,93,193.

92. Joseph wolf, ***Travels*** of Joseph Wolf, p.396.

93. Jacquemont Victor ***Letters*** p.70,215.

94. W.G.Osborne, Op.Cit., pp.85-86.

95. Joseph Wolf Op.Cit., p.396.

96. Victor Jacquemont, Op.Cit., p.215.

97. This trade was generally carried out by the people belonging to **Wattal** tribe of Kashmir. The main centres of trade in women were Lahore and Ludhaina. Even the European Travellers indulged in this immoral trade. See also Henry Thoby Princep- ***History of the Punjab,*** Vol.II, pp.165-169. Sohan Lal Suri, ***Umdat-u-Tawaraikh***, Vol.II, p.261.

98. Vigne, Op.Cit., p.216.

99. **Sheeraza** (English) Op.Cit., p.99. M.I.Khan, Op. Cit., p.113.

100. **Ibid**. Biscoe, ***Autobiography***, pp. 29-60.

101. Biscoe, ***Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade***, p.79. **Keshur Samacher**, May 1980-Vol. XV, No. 5 pp.2-3.

102. Bazaz- ***Daughters of Vitasta***, p.210. Dermont Norris, ***Kashmir The Switzerland of India***, p.9.

Chapter Seventh

Conclusion

Taylor Wilkin's remarks: "If the whole of the past stands to be a legitimate object of historical inquiry or knowledge, then, the importance of literature can not be undermined as a source, because the major product of social world is embedded in the spontaneous expression of the society".

Taking a cue from Wilkin's objective appreciation of histro-literary scholarship, we have humbly attempted to understand various facets of Kashmiri society with the help of different categories of Kashmiri folk literature. In this study the popular literature has been interpreted as one of the reliable primary source for historical investigation.

In the light of the latest historiographical canons, an attempt has been made to draw into the ambit of historical research other objects of study, particularly folklore, which until very recently had received less recognition as an independent branch of historical literature. The fresh research carried in the field of oral history and other anthropological sciences has revealed that the study of folklore, if carried seriously and attentively in tune with the historical spirit, is sure to uncover the significant hitherto unattended dimensions of given human society.

The lack of factual history to the great extent can well be balanced by the presence of linguistic or literary history. The evaluation of aesthetic piece, if done from view point of history, does in no way, injure the core creative impulse and

objective reality of that literary piece. It on the other hand help in offering a penetrating insight into the mentality of the humans, which generally play vital role in fashioning the collective social behaviour of the society.

The preceding survey of different categories of Kashmiri folk literature as a source for studying Kashmiri society during the period of great historical cries reveals.

Kashmiri society, possessed all the dominant traits of feudal character. It comprised of three major categories. Upper, middle and lower. Aristocracy and the related cadres formed the highest layer of social pyramid. Next in the social hierarchy came, the landed elite, urban Karkhanadars and Sikh and Dogra beaurocracy. The peasantry, artisans and other categories of skilled labour formed the lowest rung of Kashmiri society.

The investigations reveal that there existed no love between the ruler and the ruled. An unending process of oppression, insecurity and injustice which formed the chief features of alien governing culture had a tremendous bearing on socio-cultural and religio-economic behaviour of Kashmiri society during the period under observation. Under such unfavourable circumstances, people developed a kind of social psyche which to great extent was devoid of national conviction and social commitment. The victimized and the oppressed people under such scheme of political governance preferred silence to protest; subordinated reaction to surrender and migration was preferred to annihilation. This does not however, mean that people always remained as mute spectators to appalling heights of torture and official

barbarity. But the truth remains, that, in an environ of political gloom and social insecurity, where every action of an individual was put to strict vigilance and check by the innumerable band of Sikh and Dogra officials and their local collaborators, people devised a unique way of expressing their discontent and resentment against the official high handiness and coercive practices of the privileged few. This included among other things the desertion of cultivable land, frequent peasant migration to the plains of Hindustan and by composing anonymous satiric verses and folk saying, ridiculing the ruthless and corrupt system. The study sought to establish that what people could not tell boldly against the system for obvious reasons was documented plainly by the masses through different genres of their oral literature. The study for the first time, put to record, a good quantity of Kashmiri folk songs by approaching some unknown persons who happened to be in possession of rich treasure of Kashmiri folk songs.

The folk orientation of Islam, as revealed in the preceding pages tend us to suggest that Islam for the neo-Muslims was more as a cultural expression than a religious philosophy. This is borne out by the fact that vast majority of Kashmiri Muslims, inspite of their conversion to Islam in the 14th and 15th centuries, continued to retain the age old traditions and practices of their ancestral religion. In the words of Prof. Muhammad Ishaq Khan "In the religious history of modern Kashmir, the essential fact which needs to be grasped and treated with sensitivity, is that the Kashmiri reciting of 'dhikr', aurad, durud, manqabat and naat aloud was a well thought out way through which the unlettered folk learnt the fundamentals of faith during long centuries of Islamic acculturation".

The Shrine and the relic worship which constituted as one of the primary characteristic of folk religion in Kashmir during the period under study was also conditioned more by social relevance than the religious merit.

No wonder, therefore, an average Kashmiri's liking for saint and relic worship hardly bear the stamp of religious orthodoxy but it exhibits a kind of social psyche which makes itself intelligible as a forceful social institution which provided some relief to the grief and tension stricken Kashmiri people during the period of great historical crises.

In a male dominating society wherein the Kashmiri women enjoyed little liberty to express herself openly and boldly against the different social evils, which played havoc with her personality and identity, she expressed her suppressed feelings, joys and sorrows, pains and pangs in melodious tunes of Wanvun and Rouf songs. These two folk categories serve as the running commentary of Kashmiri women's Woes and Wails. The study investigated into the causes which led to the cultivation of some irrefutable unsound psycho-social traits among Kashmiri women during the period under reference.

The institution of Khanadamadi was in no way an exercise which aimed at enhancing the honour and the prestige of Kashmiri women. It was governed more by a psycho-economic compulsion than a social commitment.

Yet another worst feature of social life in Kashmir was the prevalence of forced labour (begar). It, not only introduced the migratory character and depopulated the valley but gave birth to innumerable social evils.

The institution of nautch girls during the Sikh period (1819-1846) and the official patronage extended by the Jammu Dogras to the unhealthy institution of prostitution (Ganawan) was not only necessitated by economic considerations but it also mirrors the sensual and feudal tastes of the ruling and the landed elite during the period under evaluation.

The present study also sought to unfold the significance of customs, habits, ceremonies, fairs, festivals, food habits, mode of dress, ornamental selection from the view point of social relevance and an objective anatomy of all these social shades brought into light that Kashmiris developed aesthetic urges and recreational exercises in consonance with their limited economic resources and the geo-climatic conditions. The study, for the first time unveiled variety of recreational pursuits which were used by common folk to amuse themselves.

In sharp contrast to peasant silence, the urban artisans on the other hand showed their resentment on various occasions against the heavy taxation policy and the inhuman attitude of the Dogra officialdom. The revolt of Kashmiri shawl weavers in 1865 was thus practical expression of the agitating mood of the urban labour class against the unfavourable behaviour of the Dagh shawl Department. Some new developments in this direction were again seen when the silk factory workers rose in revolt against the anti labour policy of factory management.

The decline of world famous shawl industry reduced the urban artisan class to the lowest ebb of poverty and starvation. This also led mass exodus of Kashmiri artisans to the various parts of Hindustan. These migrated Kashmiri artisans particularly shawl weavers played significant role in making the outsiders, especially,

Punjabi Muslims aware of agony and distress of Kashmiris. This is endorsed by the support, Kashmiris received from Punjabi Muslims during their freedom struggle against the autocratic Dogra rule.

With the coming of the long roll of European missionaries, adventurers and administrative experts in the second half of the nineteenth century, the valley experienced new ideological currents of western influence. This offered a fresh lease of life to otherwise dull and stagnant socio-political set up of Kashmir. With the establishment of the British Residency in Kashmir in the year 1885, the Dogra government under Maharaja Pratap Singh undertook number of Public welfare schemes which played significant role in improving the socio-economic conditions of the people.

In the context of the present study, the society in Kashmir composed of Muslims, Kashmiri Pandits, including a small number of Sikhs who entered Kashmir during the Afghan and Sikh rule. Except for few, the general life of people was ridden with poverty. Among them happiness was a relative term. The social stratification and exploitation do not seem to have provided any momentum for the economic development. Inspite of the modern influences which started pouring into the valley in the wake of British intervention, the process of socio-economic change remained slow. The influence of religious orthodoxy on Kashmiri Muslim society began to be lessened towards the thirties of the present century. In Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah's personality, the down trodden Kashmiris saw a the traits of national hero. This led people to compose folk verses in his honour and praise. It was under his leadership that Kashmiris fought their struggle for freedom from the autocratic Dogra rule.

Glossary

Adawat Koul	:	Sarcastic idiom coined in Kashmir during Sikh rule for a person who is by nature inimical.
Ahl-i-Hadith	:	Followers of a religious reform movement known as Ahl-i-Hadith. The people associated with this movement take special care to adhere to the Quran and hadith. They are the strict believers in the concept of unity of God and as such vehemently criticise the shrine worship.
Alim	:	A learned scholar in religious sciences, a member of the ulama class.
Asthan	:	Abode; Shrine; place of pilgrimage.
Aurad	:	Invocatory prayer.
Baba	:	The term is used in Kashmiri and Persian for one kind of Muslim Rishies.
Baraka	:	Blessing, power of blessing possessed by exalted Sufi souls.
Bebujnama	:	Bebuj is a Kashmiri term meaning lawlessness. The idiom 'story of lawlessness". By the phrase Hameed-ullah Shahabadi designated his tract depicting immediate results of Sikh rule.
Begar	:	Forced, paid or unpaid labour.
Bhand	:	The strolling players; the minstrels of Kashmir.
Bidat	:	An innovation chiefly in matters of religion; conduct of life not sanctioned by the Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the pious Khalifas.
Chakri	:	Kashmiri folk-musical choral song.
Charas	:	Opium, Bhang.
Dag Shawl	:	Department dealing with sealing and stamping a finished shawl after collecting the stamp duty before it was allowed to leave the factory premises.
Dembael	:	Kashmiri folk dance.
Dambael mety	:	Ecstatic dancers.
Dastagir	:	Helper
Dhikr	:	Remembrance of God by the repetition of Divine Names or religious formulae.
Dhumb	:	Village watchman in Kashmir.
Durud	:	A benediction; recitation of blessing for the prophet Muhammed (P.B.U.H) in namaz and every prayer of the faithful.

Faqir	:	A reckless; beggar.
Fasad Bhat	:	Idiom compound of a Persian and Kashmiri word composed during Sikh rule, for a garrulous trouble-shooting person.
Fatiha	:	The first chapter of the Quran, recited in every namaz; in special fatiha ceremonies in the valley of Kashmir the fatihah is recited over Saltish Kashmiri Tea for the benefit of a decreased person.
Galadar	:	Corn dealer; hoarder.
Galwan	:	Originally a keeper of horse, subsequently a horse thief, robber, marauder.
	:	The idiom compound of Persian and Punjabi words, was coined during Sikh rule in Kashmir to designate a timid soldier.
Haj	:	Pilgrimage to Mecca and one of the fundamentals of Islam.
Harkara	:	Peon, scout, messenger.
Harem	:	Seraglio
Imam	:	One who leads the ritual prayers at a mosque.
Jagir	:	Estate, rent free land granted by a chief.
Kangri	:	A portable earthenware bowl, covered with a frame of wicker work; Kashmiris put hot embers into the bowl for keeping themselves warm during the winter and the cold season; usually kangri (called kangar in vernacular) is kept under a long loose-wrapper (pheran) or a blanket.
Kardar	:	Land agent of the state with large powers of supervision of harvest, assessment, etc. etc.
Karkhana	:	Factory; workshop.
Karkhandar	:	Factory owner.
Kazib Rather	:	Idiom coined during Sikh rule in Kashmir to designate a malicious, hard-hearted person.
Khanqah	:	The spiritual abode of a Sufi. Here spiritual training was imparted to the disciples. The building generally attached public lungar with it.
Kharraw	:	Wooden shoes.
Khirqa	:	The patched garment worn by Sufis and Rishis.
Kotwal	:	Chief Police Officer.
Kram	:	Nickname.

Mafajat Quli	:	Idiom coined in Kashmir during Sikh rule to designate a cruel officer who deserves hell.
Mag	:	Name of the tenth Hindu month. (Corresponding to January February).
Manqabat	:	A religious-literary genre glorifies the accomplishments of blessed souls.
Masnawi	:	A literary genre.
Moi Mubarak	:	Holy hair of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) lodged in Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar.
Muqqadam	:	Chief; Head of a village community.
Mulla	:	A learned man, a religious scholar.
Namaz	:	The Persian term for liturgical prayer (Salat).
Na'at	:	Poetry in praise of the Prophet; the tradition of reciting na'at aloud in chorus still exists in the mosques and Shrines of the valley.
Nauch	:	Dancing and singing by professional women.
Nazar	:	Present, offering.
Nazrana	:	A gift or present.
Nikah	:	Marriage contract.
Pashmina	:	Woollen stuff of Peshm (fleece) wool of goats rearing on the uplands of changthan and Lhasa.
Patwari	:	Village land record keeper.
Pheran	:	A long loose-wrapper worn by Kashmiris to protect themselves against the cold.
Pir	:	Persian equivalent of the Arabic Shaikh; the spritual guide; the mystic leader.
Pir Parast	:	Worshipper of the spiritual preceptor
Pir waer	:	The valley of spiritual leaders or Sufis; Kashmir is also called Pir waer by a large number of the devotees of the shrines of Sufis and Rishis.
Purdah	:	Curtain, veil.
Qassaba	:	Muslim women's head gear.

Rajtarangini	:	Lit. "River of Kings". The name originally given to his chronicle of Kashmir by Pandit Kalhana (1149 A.D.).
Rasum	:	Perquisite; bribe.
Rishwat-Baba	:	Idiom coined during Sikh rule in Kashmir to designate a corrupt official taking bribes freely.
Rishwear	:	The valley of Rishis.
Roub Khana	:	Grand drawing rooms.
Sazawul	:	Revenue official senior in rank and office to Shaqdar who supervised distribution of harvest between the State and cultivator and received salary for ten months at the rate of 2« rupees per month and additional money from the villages as his pre-requisites.
Shahamat Singh	:	Idiom coined in Kashmir during Sikh rule for a ruthless official.
Shikdar	:	Revenue official senior in rank to Kardar. His duty was to sit in a village and watch the crops. He received eight kharwars of shali from the state but much more from the village as per-requisites.
Shirk	:	Paganism; idolatory.
Shrad	:	A kind of funeral rite or ceremony in honour of the departed spirits of deceased relatives observed at various fixed periods. It consists of offerings with water and fire to the gods and manes, and of food and gifts to the relatives present and to the Brahmanas reciting mantras.
Sunna	:	The tradition of the Prophet, his manner of life according to which the faithful should act.
Tabaruk	:	Blessing.
Tarranga	:	Pandit women's headgear.
Tauhid	:	Believing in the oneness of God.
Tika	:	Holy-mark on the forehead of Hindus.
Tirath	:	A Shrine or sacred place of pilgrimage.
Ulama	:	Scholar-Jurists upon whom the interpretation of the sharia rests.
Ustad	:	Master workman.
Vopalhak	:	Dispsacus inermis.
Wali	:	Portage of God; Saint; Protector.
Wattal	:	Scavenger.

Wazwan : Kashmiri banquet – A feast prepared by professional chef is known as wazwan. The term waza is basically a Sanskrit term waje, which means cook. Another theory with regard to the origin of wazwan is that the term has been derived from "Ashpaaz" a Persian term which means the special cook proficient in making soup. The term with the passage of time became waza. Wazwan is generally prepared in the courtyard of the house by head waaza assisted by a band of professional cooks. After skinning the sheep, the meat is distributed by the head waza for variety of wazwan dishes. For 'Rista' and 'Gowashtaba", meat is continuously pounded all day long. The concept of wazwan is said to have been imported into Kashmir from Iran, and is now an integral part of the Kashmiri way of life. For preparing a delicious wazwan, spices like cardamom, ceinna mon, red pepper, powder, turmeric and crushed aniseed are added to the wazwan. Wazwan is always eaten on a large platter known as Trami around which four people sit together to share one larger plate or Trami.

Zaban Daraz : Sharp tongued person.

Zaildar : Officer in charge of collecting revenue in a district.

Zamindar : Landlord; land owner.

Zari-i-nikah : Marriage-deed tax; fee charged in confirmation of marriage deed.

Ziarat : Pilgrimage,. visit to a shrine; in the valley of Kashmir it also denotes a glimpse of the relics of the Sufis caught by the visitors to the shrines on special occasions. The shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar is famous for being the repository of the Prophets sacred hair which is exhibited on special occasions.

Ziaratgah : Seat of a Muslim divine.